

Are you bringing up
a little despot?

The series all parents
must read page 17

THE BOOKS

FOR SCHOOLS taken page 18. PLEASE take a look at the INTERNET BILL PAGE

Jerry, Mick
and the
kiss 'n' tell
ultimatum

page 15

30p
EVERY
WEEKDAY

Turks seize terrorist as he leaves embassy

Girl sets fire to herself as Kurds protest

By MICHAEL BINYON AND ADRIAN LEE



A 15-year-old schoolgirl set herself alight outside the Greek embassy in London yesterday as Kurds across Europe erupted in fury at the arrest of the rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan. Thousands of Kurds stormed Greek embassies throughout Europe, kidnapped hostages and fought running battles with the police in angry protest at Turkey's dramatic seizure of Mr Ocalan, leader of the PKK Kurdish Workers Party.

In about 20 cities, including a dozen European capitals, frenzied Kurds broke into Greek embassies and consulates in the early morning and barricaded themselves in. Outside, huge crowds scuffled with police and chanted demands for the release of the fugitive terrorist leader, arrested in Nairobi after leaving the residence of the Greek Ambassador.

Outraged Kurdish supporters immediately accused Greece of betraying Mr Ocalan, saying that he had been lured out of the residence by a trick. Athens admitted giving him shelter, but said that he had disappeared on the way to the airport.

Mr Ocalan was flown back to Turkey late last night to stand trial on charges of masterminding the bloody PKK insurrection in southeastern Turkey that has cost some 30,000 lives over the past 14 years.

In London, Vienna and The Hague yesterday, protesters seized hostages inside Greek diplomatic buildings, including the wife, eight-year-old son and housekeeper of the Greek Ambassador to the Netherlands. In Bonn they also held two people in the Kenyan embassy.

In London, hundreds of angry Kurds gathered in Holland Park, close to the Greek Embassy, which was seized and occupied by about 50

end to the occupations, by nightfall there was still a tense stand-off at most missions across Europe. In Strasbourg 30 protesters with petrol cans threatened to burn the Greek mission but were ejected.

Details of Mr Ocalan's dramatic seizure in Nairobi were unclear last night. Announcing his capture, Bulent Ecevit, the Turkish Prime Minister, said: "He will account for his actions in front of the Turkish justice system."

Judicial officials said that he would be charged under Article 125 with trying to set up a separatist state — a charge that carries the death penalty. No one has been executed in Turkey since 1984.

The PKK yesterday accused America, Israel and Turkey of a "secret service action" to capture Mr Ocalan. It said that he was in "great danger" and gave a warning of a further violent response if he was harmed. Mr Ocalan said earlier this year that at least 10,000 people in Europe would begin a death fast if he was returned to Turkey to stand trial.

After Mr Ecevit's announcement, Kurdish prisoners in jails began hunger strikes, and one burnt himself to death. The US applauded the capture of Mr Ocalan but denied any direct hand in his seizure. "We're obviously very pleased with the apprehension of this terrorist leader," a White House spokesman said.

The Foreign Office, concerned about the safety of British embassies, said it would not make any statement on the arrest that could be seen as provocative but was "aware" of Mr Ocalan's capture.

Despite calls from the PKK for an

Ocalan: under arrest in Turkey

protesters. Police fought running battles with others trying to reach the mission before sealing off the area. Dozens were arrested.

Nejla Kanteper, from Wood Green in North London and the daughter of a Kurdish refugee, set herself alight and ran towards the main body of protesters sitting in the road in Holland Park Avenue. She was quickly wrestled to the ground by police and other demonstrators who used coats to smother the flames. Police at the scene doused the burns on her back before she was lifted into an ambulance, defiantly raising her hand in a victory salute and chanting "Long live Kurdistan".

Smart Wheeler, who witnessed the incident, said: "She took her coat off then I just saw the flames whoosh up. I didn't see her put any petrol on herself. The police risked their lives trying to put the flames out with their jackets."

Despite calls from the PKK for an

Fearless sister, page 2
Leading article, page 19



London schoolgirl Nejla Kanteper set herself alight yesterday as Kurds protested across Europe

England expects Keegan as coach

Kevin Keegan is expected to be named by the Football Association as the new England coach. The FA is believed to have agreed that the former England forward could also continue to manage second division Fulham. Page 44

Brown in black

Chancellor Gordon Brown is heading for a large budget surplus. Official figures showed that £12.4 billion of debt was paid off in January, a record monthly figure. Page 23

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Three horses killed in racetrack collision

By RICHARD EVANS, RACING CORRESPONDENT

THREE racehorses were killed in a freak accident at Sedgefield racecourse yesterday after they collided in a split second. I managed to avoid two of the loose horses but I had no chance of missing the other one."

The worst accident since three horses died at the first fence in the Red Onion Novices Chase turned and ran the wrong way round the 1½-mile left-handed outer circuit. They came on a collision course as the remainder of the field approached the second last fence.

Royal Scimitar was killed instantly and Lorcan Wyrer, his jockey, was catapulted into the air but escaped with nothing worse than a sore thumb. Floss The Boss and Skane River also died as a total of six horses were brought down, along with jockeys.

Wyrer said: "There is always the possibility that something

like this will happen here or at Fakenham. It all happened in a split second. I managed to avoid two of the loose horses but I had no chance of missing the other one."

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Wyrer said: "There is always the possibility that something

worst incidents of its type I have seen. The stewards are going to forward a report to the Jockey Club with their recommendations as to what can be done to make sure it doesn't happen again. There are two escape routes for the horses but regrettably in this instance they didn't take them."

John Moxie, spokesman for the Jockey Club, said: "No issue has a higher priority with the Jockey Club than the safety and welfare of horse and rider and clearly if there are any lessons that can be learnt from this tragic accident, we will take them on board straightforwardly. The problem of loose horses on a racecourse is not a new one and has been studied at length. Several suggestions have been put forward and some have been tried."

The judge had warned the jury in the case of Anthony Sawonwuk, who faces four murder charges, that the trip would be no holiday... Page 3

Racing, page 39

Triumph for Robbie Williams

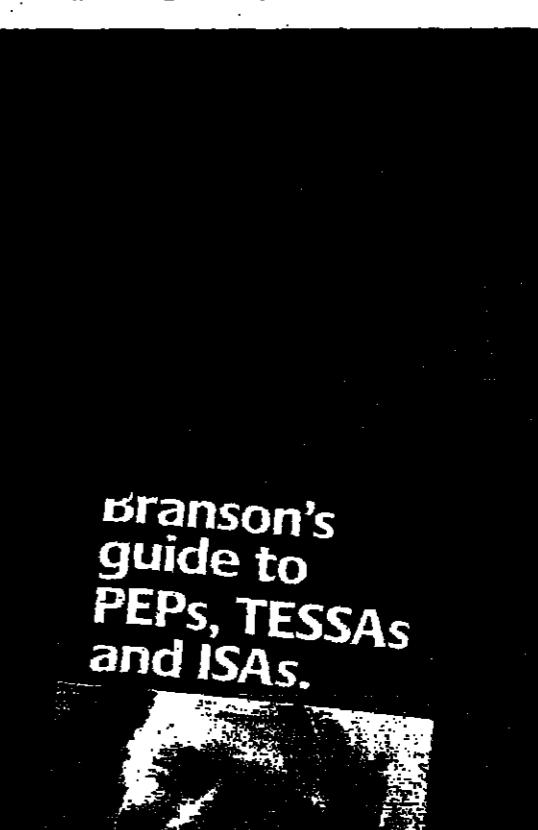
By CAROL MIDDLEBY
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

ROBBIE Williams was hailed as a symbol of triumph over adversity last night after overcoming drink and drug addiction to win three Brit Awards.

Williams, 26, won best male singer, best single for his number one hit Angels and best video for his song Millennium. His career had plummeted after he left the band Take That.

Best album award was won by The Manic Street Preachers, who were also best British group. The Radio 1 DJ Zoe Ball's fiance, Norman Cook, won best dance act and Natalie Imbruglia won two awards. Annie Lennox and Dave Stewart won an award for outstanding contribution to British music and Muhammad Ali was given the Freddie Mercury Award. Des'ree was named best female singer.

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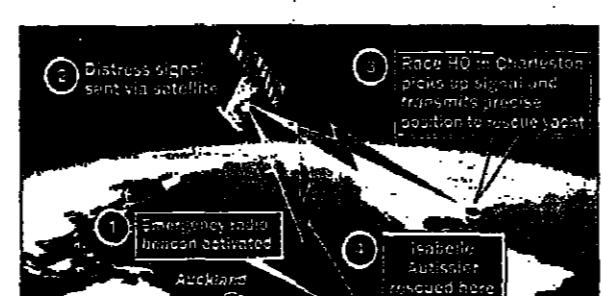
Virgin Direct Personal Financial Service Ltd is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority. For your security all calls are recorded and randomly monitored.

Race rival turns back to rescue stricken sailor

By EDWARD GORMAN
SAILING CORRESPONDENT

THE French solo yachtswoman Isabelle Autissier was yesterday rescued by a fellow competitor in the Around Alone single-handed round-the-world race, after her boat capsized in the South Pacific Ocean.

Autissier, 42, raised the alarm on Monday when her 60ft yacht, PRB, was about 1,900 miles west of Cape Horn in an area too remote for an airbone rescue. Race organizers in Charleston, South Carolina, decided Autissier's best



hope of survival was the Italian sailor, Giovanni Soldini, 32, who was 200 miles north

of her position. It took Soldini in FILA 24 hours to reach Autissier. He was directed by race officials via his on-board satellite communications system. Soldini approached after dark and spotted Autissier's boat almost immediately — a remarkable feat in such a huge expanse of water.

Race officials described Soldini's actions as a "masterful, heroic act of seamanship".

Although Soldini has Autissier on board, he is still in the race, though she must not assist him in handling the boat.

"I'm on an Italian tour now... and not unhappy about it," Autissier said in a message telexed via satellite.



Autissier: capsized beyond the reach of rescue aircraft

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07

Rooker makes mincemeat of Tories' gene food fads

Pink with indignation and bearing an unsettling resemblance to a genetically modified potato, Tim Yeo the Tory agriculture spokesman, demanded that ministers come clean about GM foods. Had the Prime Minister yielded to 'pressure from President Clinton, who is known to be close to Monks?

'Who's she?' MPs giggled. Jeff Rooker, the junior minister who may be a genetically modified bus conductor, and who was leading the Government's counter-attack, kept a straight face. Rooker was magnificent. Rarely has an Oppo-

sition been trounced so fast and so comprehensively.

We sketch writers are no more food scientists than MPs, and at the end we were hardly the wiser. But one truth Mr Rooker did lay bare: the Tories have climbed aboard this bandwagon opportunistically and late. Rooker rumbled that home. As William Hague and senior colleagues slunk early from the Chamber, even they seemed to acknowledge their humiliation.

The occasion had a Swiftian absurdity...

Minister: 'Tomato paste — September 1994.'

MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

Hon Members: 'Oh!'
Minister: 'Soya beans — April and February 1995.'

Hon Members: 'Ah!'

Minister: 'Maize — 1996 and 1997.'

Hon Members: 'Oh! Oh! Aah!'

Roused to a fury, Mr Rooker bellowed: 'My advice on eating raw potatoes? The same as my advice on eating raw chicken. DON'T DO IT!' For the Tories, Mr Yeo did

his best but his problems lay not in his performance but his argument. Framed to justify intelligent concern, the Tory case just about held water. Framed to justify a fit of finger-stabbing outrage, it was ludicrous.

Rooker quickly demonstrated that the Conservative Party seemed to have performed an abrupt U-turn from an untroubled acceptance of GM technology in government to a

near-hysterical alarm in opposition.

Jeff Rooker is a variable Dispatch Box performer. Incurably earnest and with a short fuse, he sometimes gets into a tangle. But the earnestness pays off in questions — like this — of public trust. Rooker believed and understood what he was saying and it showed.

The Brummie minister became so fired up that he began dropping and inserting clichés almost randomly: '... only after the most careful scrutiny of their effects on human health.' A smooth talker would have sorted out his

attempts, but in his honest passion Rooker was casting consonants to the winds. Even backbench doubters were won over.

Dismaying his front bench, Ian Taylor, a former Tory science minister, told his party that GM foods had turned us all 'into headless chickens'. But the power of food to ignite feeling is astonishing. For the first time in living memory Bill Cash (C. Stone) quailed before a threat which did not originate in Brussels. Martin Smyth (JUP, Belfast) denounced a conspiracy which even he could not blame on the Pope. Speaking for the Lib-

eral Democrats, Paul Tyler, a genetically modified cross between the Duke of Windsor and a Tory, blamed both the other parties.

A fortnight ago, when William Hague first went ballistic on GM foods, this sketch noted that, bizarre as the performance seemed, the Tory Leader might well succeed in starting a food scare.

Now he has. But to start a food scare is to play on the nursery slopes of politics or journalism. Anyone can do it. To stop a food scare is a Himalayan task. That accomplishment was yesterday Jeff Rooker's.

NEWS IN BRIEF

MPs attack new phone numbers

Plans to force millions of people to alter their telephone numbers this summer four years after the last change were condemned by MPs. The Commons Trade and Industry Select Committee criticised Ofcom, the telephone watchdog, for proposing the move without adequately consulting telephone users. The MPs accused Ofcom of being 'unjustly swayed' by operators' claims that technological difficulties prevented them from using existing numbers more efficiently. Ofcom said: 'If these code changes do not take place London and perhaps other cities will run out of number capacity by summer 2000.'

Laser surgery is abandoned

State-of-the-art laser surgery for patients with heart disease has been abandoned after trials at Papworth Hospital, Cambridge, showed that more patients died after the operation than those given simple medication. The laser operation had been widely acclaimed in America and Europe as a breakthrough in treating patients with a rare kind of angina.

Courts will pay for case delays

People will be paid compensation if courts and judges are not ready to start trials on time under the civil justice reforms to come into force in April. At a conference on the changes, Sir Richard Scott, Vice Chancellor and Head of Civil Justice, said that if lawyers and litigants were to be held to account for delays and made to pay for wasted costs, then so should the courts.

Progressive Jews redress balance

Britain's progressive Jewish community took the first step to gaining its own 'chief rabbi' with the creation of a post of associate president at the Council of Christians and Jews. Jonathan Sacks, the Chief Rabbi who heads the Orthodox community, is the only Jewish president of the council. The progressive community wanted the new post to redress the balance.

Death rate rises for young men

Death rates among young men are getting worse, even though they are falling among almost all other parts of the population. Official figures show that while the number of male teenagers dying in accidents has fallen, they still account for 44 per cent of deaths in the 15 to 19 age group. The increase has been from suicides, mental illness caused by drugs or alcohol, or infections.

Irvine defeated in the Lords

Lord Irvine of Lairg, the Lord Chancellor, suffered a fresh defeat last night when peers voted against his plan for a Criminal Defence Service that would employ salaried lawyers. The House of Lords voted by 189 votes to 134 to back a Liberal Democrat move against the service, which lawyers feared would be a first step towards a public defender system.

Passengers leap from jumbo jet

Passengers forced open the door of a Boeing 747 jumbo jet about to get ready for take-off from Heathrow and leapt out in panic after spotting flames emerging from an engine. Boeing and Malaysian Airlines are investigating the incident last September, which was revealed in a Department of Transport air accident report published yesterday. Two people suffered minor injuries.



Nejla Kanterer lying on the pavement near the Greek Embassy yesterday as the emergency services go to her aid

'My sister was fearless and passionate about our cause'

Susie Steiner and Stewart Tendler
on a Kurdish protester's family

THE 15-year-old who set herself alight as part of a Kurdish protest was described last night as fearless and angry by her younger sister.

While Nejla Kanterer was being treated for burns at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, Gulsen, 12, spoke of how the family were regularly beaten in night raids by

Turkish police in their native village in Cyprus. They fled to Britain in 1993.

In the early hours of yesterday Gulsen watched as Nejla, her 20-year-old brother, Ersin, and father, Suleyman, left their home in Wood Green, North London, for the Greek Embassy. They had heard of

plans for the protest at about

1am, when a broadcast went

out on a Kurdish satellite television channel. While the three decided to set off then and there, Gulsen's mother, Kadire, who speaks no English, stayed at home with her.

'They would have let me go but I was sleeping,' Gulsen said last night. 'I wouldn't want to go because I'm really scared of it all.'

The Kanterer family moved to Britain six years ago

from their home in Dikpazar, Cyprus, a Turkish region where, according to Mrs Kanterer, beatings from the Turkish police were committed regularly at night.

It was that experience, said Gulsen, translating for her mother last night, that made Nejla so political and so angry. 'She has felt very strongly about the whole thing for a couple of years. She is not scared of anything. She is a very loud person.'

Nejla's brother, who works in a restaurant, accompanied Nejla in the ambulance to hospital. Both he and her father, who is unemployed and learning English at a Kurdish community centre in Haringey, northeast London, are not believed to have been with the girl when she set herself

alight. 'They would have stopped her,' Gulsen said. 'My mother is very upset.'

In the past eight years Kurds have grown more militant against Turkish targets in London. Right-wing Turkish groups have retaliated.

In 1991 there were attacks

on a Turkish bank in the City of London and the Turkish Embassy in Belgrade. A year later there was another attack on the embassy and the BBC World Service headquarters.

In 1993 a Kurdish refugee

trying to get political asylum in Britain set fire to himself in immigration service offices at Croydon, South London.

There were larger, violent

clashes with police in 1994 after the European spokesman for the PKK group was arrested under the Immigration Act. In 1996 two Kurdish militants were jailed for four years each after being caught fleeing from an attempt to fire-bomb a Turkish bank.

Martyrs who fanned the flames of protest

BY ROBIN YOUNG

SELF-IMMOLATION as a means of political protest has become a favoured weapon among Kurds.

In November last year two Kurdish men set themselves on fire in Moscow in protest against the arrest of Abdullah Ocalan, the leader of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), in Italy. Both survived.

At the same time it was reported that 11 Turkish Kurds attempted self-immolation in the mainly Kurdish region of south-eastern Turkey where the PKK had been leading its campaign for independence.

The most famous self-immolator is Jan Palach, who as a 21-year-old student in 1969 set himself on fire in Wenceslas Square, Prague, in protest against Czech politicians' acceptance of Soviet occupation.

Quang Duc, a protester in Vietnam in 1966

Palach was almost certainly influenced by the stories of Vietnamese monks who set themselves on fire during the Vietnam war in defence of their religious liberties.

In the East self-immolation is more familiar than in the West. It was required of many Indian widows until outlawed, not entirely successfully, under British rule in the 19th century.

In April 1998 Thupten Ngodup, a Tibetan monk, immolated himself in protest against Indian police arresting demonstrators when a Chinese general visited New Delhi.

A South Korean student set himself on fire in protest against President Kim Young Sam in July 1997.

The Indian cult Ananda Marga practised self-immolation in the 1970s in protest against the arrest of their leader Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar on charges of conspiracy to murder former cult members. And at Waco, Texas, in April 1993 the Branch Davidian leader, David Koresh, was alleged to have urged his followers to burn themselves to death.

Irvine defeated in the Lords

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Sainsbury 'a lame duck' minister

Continued from page 1

Crispin Tickell, chairman of the Government's panel on sustainable development and former ambassador to the United Nations, said he was concerned about the threats posed by the new technology to human health and the environment.

He said he did not want genetic engineering of foods and plants to lead to a repeat of epidemics like Aids where the emergency response had been 'distressingly ad hoc... and patchy'.

And the scientist at the centre of the controversy broke

his silence to claim that his fears would be proved correct.

Dr Arpad Puszai, whose research suggested the growth and immune systems of rats fed genetically modified potatoes suffered, spoke after a gagging order was lifted.

Dr Puszai said he felt bitter at his treatment and hoped a Commons Select Committee would vindicate his concerns.

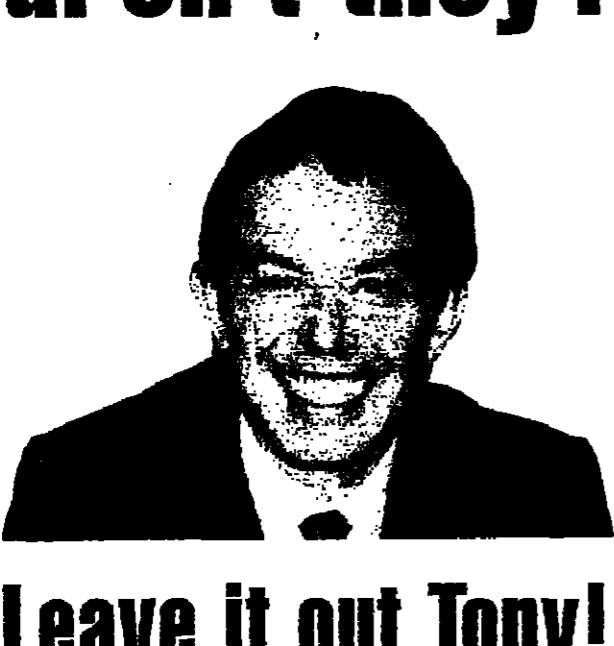
The scientist — who suffered a heart attack amid the intense pressure — warned the public: 'I would not eat these potatoes myself.'

Lord Sainsbury, the third minister with previous busi-

ness links to come under pressure during this Parliament, issued a lengthy statement explaining how his interests in a blind trust and how when he became a minister he said how he would stand aside from decisions or discussions having any effect on the Sainsbury company.

He said that he had not taken part in any government decisions or discussions relating to genetically modified food policy. He disclosed that on one occasion when GM policy was discussed at the Cabinet Committee on biotechnology he had left the meeting.

Hunted foxes 1



Leave it out Tony!

To find out more about the genetic food fiasco and what the alternatives are, call free on 0800 269 065 or visit www.greenpeace.org.uk/truthfood

GREENPEACE



Trail deep in snow and past dread



Alan Hamilton joins an Old Bailey jury, judge and lawyers on a 1,200-mile foray into the bitter cold of Belarus, as they seek the truth about a day of Jewish slaughter in 1942

DEEP in a pine wood near the Belarusian village of Domachevo stands a stark obelisk flanked by two unmarked mass graves. Its Russian inscription is dedicated to "the victims of German fascist terror, 1941-45". Soviet memorials never mention Jews.

Along a track covered by snow, Fedor Zan, a small, wizened man of 75 in a grey raincoat and brown fur hat, yesterday led the judge, counsel and jury of Britain's Central Criminal Court, well wrapped against the sub-zero cold, to a site in the middle of the wood. His village's former Jewish population of 3,000 were led here, stripped naked and machinegunned into pits.

The area was different then, with scrubby bushes instead of stately Scots pines and birches, and there was no snow on the ground. But atrocities committed 57 years ago still haunt what would otherwise be a Christmas-card scene.

Mr Zan was once a school friend of Anthony Sawoniuuk.

Now he is a key prosecution witness in the Old Bailey trial of the village boy who, the Crown says, grew into a policeman exercising a ruthless authority over Jews and gentiles alike, and who today faces four murder charges.

Mr Justice Potts had warned the jury back in London that its unprecedented visit to a foreign country would be no holiday. Nevertheless, its sombre guided tour of alleged past brutality had its jovial tinge. Although still formally a court in session, the participants were able to abandon the usual rules of dress.

The judge wore a bright red, fleecy Noddy hat with earflaps. John Nutting, QC, leading counsel for the prosecution, wore a long brown suede coat and puffed a pipe. William Clegg, QC, for the defence, sported a bright Austrian skiing pullover with

The jurors consulted their maps and copious notes. Fedor Zan blew his nose and dabbed his eyes

again. There, he indicated, was where he had hidden. He fought his way through the leafless bushes and took up a position 20 yards from the track. A court usher in fluorescent yellow vest followed him to mark the place.

"Is that the place?" the judge called, and the interpreter translated.

"Da, da, da, da." Mr Zan shouted back rapidly, almost as though imitating machine-gun fire. He returned to the

track while, one by one, the 12 jurors stumbled through the undergrowth to observe the spot.

From this hiding place, Mr Zan claims, he watched as Mr Sawoniuuk machinegunned 15 Jewish women and girls directly into a ready-dug grave. The judge said that he would not ask Mr Zan to estimate the distance at which he first heard the screams.

He was then asked to walk to where the shootings had occurred, while the jury remained on the track. Accompanied by an interpreter and court official, he walked a considerable distance further into the wood, beyond the Soviet memorial, and raised a hand twice to indicate the claimed sites of two graves. Allied aerial photographs from 1942 indicate that there were few trees then; yesterday the jury could barely see Mr Zan.

He was thanked and allowed to go home, at least until he reappears as a witness in London. But he was asked if he could wait by the roadside near his house so that he could be filmed and photographed; the judge reminded reporters

and photographers that the court was technically sitting throughout its walk in the woods, and that normal court-reporting restrictions — which forbid identifying witnesses or jurors — still applied.

The court walked the short distance to inspect the memorial and its adjoining pits, one of which has a substantial pine in the middle, an indication that the tree was not there when it was dug in 1942. The two mass graves are those of

the well-documented massacre of 2,500 of Domachevo's Jewish population by squads of the SS Einsatzgruppen, aided by local collaborators.

But the charges against Mr Sawoniuuk relate to later search-and-kill "mopping-up" operations, when those who had escaped the initial slaughter were hunted down and eliminated.

Domachevo is a village of green wooden houses, with as many horses and carts as trac-

tors. In 1941 its population was 90 per cent Jewish; there are none left now. Earlier in the day the jurors had been taken on a conducted tour of the village, the better to understand the locations from where witnesses will say they saw key events.

First they saw Mr Sawoniuuk's former house, which he had dismantled in the Jewish ghetto and rebuilt in a more favourable location in Sverdlovsk Street. As they

looked, a young woman peeped from within through the net curtains, and a knot of curious old women gathered in the street outside.

With Mr Nutting and Mr Clegg as their guides, they moved on past the large blue wooden Russian Orthodox church, to the police station, destroyed by partisans and since rebuilt, where Mr Sawoniuuk was stationed. It was from here, the Crown alleges, that Mr Zan's aunt and family

were led by Mr Sawoniuuk to slaughter on suspicion of collaborating with anti-Nazi partisans in the forests.

With silent villagers watching from street corners, the jury was shown the perimeter of the old Jewish ghetto, where a population of nearly 3,000 was corralled behind barbed wire eventually to be led out in groups and systematically murdered. Nothing remains of it now and Pushkin Street, the so-called road of death down which Jews were led to the woods and to the machine gun, is a peaceful side-street of cottages and gardens.

Much else has changed. The jury was shown the cinema, once the Roman Catholic Church from which worshippers were ordered out to watch Jews being led to their deaths, punched and rifle-butted on their way.

Time and a foot of snow today blur the picture of total recall. When the trial resumes in London, however, the jury will have a sharper image of four alleged atrocities among thousands committed in one of the darkest hours of European history.



The jury at Domachevo wood yesterday to hear testimony from Fedor Zan, below left. Others there included, below from left, Mr Justice Potts, William Clegg, QC, and John Nutting, QC



BBC blows the whistle on sheepdog series

By CLAUDIA JOSEPH

THE BBC is to drop *One Man and His Dog*, the long-running television series about sheepdog trials.

In an attempt to soften the blow to its rural audience, the corporation has said that there will be a special farewell edition before the end of the year.

The BBC said: "One Man and His Dog has been a special part of BBC2 for 23 years but after much thought we feel it is time to take a new look at the way we approach country matters. The programme will, therefore, not return in its current form."

Robin Page, who has presented the series for the past four years, urged the show's 1.8 million viewers to write to the BBC calling for the decision to be reversed.

He said he had not been given a reason for the decision. "It's typical of how arrogant, stupid and out of touch senior executives are," he said. "They don't seem to have any concept of anything outside London. They are obsessed with things that are supposed to be trendy."

"This is going to upset a lot of country people. It's another kick in the teeth for the rural part of our society. Their livelihood is already under threat and now their entertainment is under threat as well."

One Man and His Dog, which was created by Philip Gilbert, the television produc-

er, was first screened in 1976 as a one-off programme but returned the next year to Saturday afternoon, when farmers are working.

Presented by Philip Drabble, with Eric Halsall as commentator, it became a hit by BBC2 standards, attracting an audience of almost 8 million in its heyday. In 1981, 7.8 million watched the series, which was screened midweek at 9.25pm.

By August 1990, when Katy Cropper became the first woman to compete in the series, winning the semi-final with her dog Trini, the show had been moved to weekends.

Four years later, Mr Drabble retired after 18 years, to be replaced by Mr Page. In 1996 Mr Halsall died and Gus Dermody joined the show. Mr

Page, who farms 130 acres, believes that the show has not had a chance since being rescheduled last year to Saturday afternoon, when farmers are working.

Scheduled against *Grandstand*, it has been attracting an average of 1.6 million viewers but this falls during five sporting events and was just 700,000 during the Five Nations rugby tournament.

Mr Page said: "BBC2 has been trying to cut the show's audience by showing it on a Saturday afternoon. Its natural audience can't watch it."

Mr Dermody said: "I meet

numerous farmers and shepherds annoyed by the BBC's attitude towards *One Man and His Dog*."

Mr Page, who farms 130 acres, believes that the show has not had a chance since being rescheduled last year to Saturday afternoon, when farmers are working.

He said yesterday: "Never have I seen a dog come in this profoundly shocked, given the extent of the injuries. I don't believe the injuries were life threatening in themselves. What was life threatening was the severe amount of shock present in this animal. Had it not received treatment it would simply have died."

Copper was being chased across common land by members of the Chiddington, Leconfield and Cowdray Hunt, who met at Upperton, West Sussex, when Andrew Wasley, a saboteur, intervened and the fox escaped into a rabbit hole. The fox eventually backed out of the hole and an

other saboteur covered it with her coat until it was taken to the vet.

Patrick Bateson, Professor of Ethology at Cambridge University, who carried out the study on deer for the National Trust, told Radio 4's *Today* programme yesterday: "I regard this as the first hard evidence that I have come across that foxes are hunted to the point where they are very severely stressed. I regard this as an important step in getting evidence that would lead one to believe that fox hunting is unacceptable."

However, Bob Baskerville, a vet and member of the Countryside Alliance, suggested that the saboteurs had caused the stress. "There is a great deal of evidence throughout all species that handling and transport induces stress," he said.

Richard Edwards, the vet who treated

the cub, which has been named Copper after the policeman's helmet that protected it from the hounds, believes the fox would have died from the stress it suffered, if it had not been treated. He discov-

ered that Copper displayed all the signs

of intense trauma, including a racing

heart, no colour in its gums and blood in

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Oedipal fury drove son to murder

Psychologist compares killing to Greek tragedy, reports Paul Wilkinson



Kathleen Geldart: shared shopping and cinema trips with son



Simon Geldart: told mother he loved her as he killed her

THE son of a former Tory mayor was convicted yesterday of murdering his mother in an "explosion of emotional violence" that was likened to a Greek tragedy.

Simon Geldart, 18, was ordered to be detained at Her Majesty's pleasure for battering to death with a wine bottle the mother with whom he had an Oedipal-type relationship.

Paul Geldart, who saw his son sentenced, had made a television call for the return of hanging. The former JP had also accused Tory ministers of being soft on criminals and volunteered to teach young offenders himself. He refused to comment on the sentence yesterday, referring inquiries to the publicist Max Clifford. Asked why he was involved with Mr Clifford, he said: "I am not doing it for the money. I know the reasons why I am doing it and that is what matters."

Mr Geldart was condemned by his wife's sister, who also said that her nephew should have received the death penalty. "Simon and my son were like brothers but I still believe

in a life for a life," Angela Hutchinson, 43, said.

Referring to the link with Mr Clifford, she said: "It is very upsetting and something the rest of the family knew nothing about."

Tesside Crown Court was told that Geldart, who was 17 at the time of the murder last March, killed his mother, Kathleen, 46, because he knew that she would refuse his re-

fertility treatment to conceive and had been the boy's confessor while his father was a strict disciplinarian. Mother and son went shopping and to the cinema together and he bought her expensive pottery.

Christopher Green, a forensic psychiatrist and expert on homicide, said the killing was like a scene from a Greek tragedy. He concluded that Geldart had suffered a "catathymic

parents did not know that he had dropped out of college. He mistakenly believed that his girlfriend was pregnant and the day before the murder had been sacked from his part-time restaurant job.

On the night of the murder, the prosecution said, Geldart wanted his mother's car to meet a friend. He emptied the contents of a wine bottle before going to her bedroom, where

she was dozing. Geldart told the court: "I don't know what happened next but I remember I was hitting my mum. I put a pillow over mum's head because I didn't like what I saw." He said that he wept and said,

"I'm sorry, I love you" as he hit her several times about the head. He rummaged through her bag and took the car keys after trying to wipe her blood from the walls.

Geldart, from Darlington, denied murder because he said it was not his intention to kill his mother, but the Crown refused to accept his plea of guilty to manslaughter on the ground of diminished responsibility.

You have a son trapped in a close relationship with a mother he cannot break away from to become a man

Policemen cleared of being drunk on plane

Road and air rage take a room at the hotel

By RUSSELL JENKINS

A POLICE officer and his son who is also in the force were acquitted yesterday of being drunk on board a transatlantic flight. However they could lose their jobs after the judge branded their behaviour loud, bawdy and objectionable.

Inspector David Perrett, 49, his son Richard Perrett, 27, a constable, and Peter Beck, 55, a pub landlord, were discharged from the dock but Judge Ensor demanded tougher penalties and longer sentences for drunken air passengers. He also called on airlines to stop plying passengers with alcohol on long-haul flights.

Manchester Crown Court was told that the men, all from Halifax, West Yorkshire, who were returning from a golfing holiday in Florida, were served several gins and whiskies and then shared a litre bottle of duty-free gin. They became aggressive and abusive.

Judge Ensor refused a request for costs to be paid from the public purse, landing the men with a bill estimated at about £10,000. The two police officers now face an internal disciplinary hearing.

□ A man attacked fellow passengers on a jumbo jet and smashed an inside window after drinking three double whiskies and taking a Valium tablet. Uxbridge magistrates were told yesterday. Lee Thresher, 29, an electrician, pleaded guilty to endangering the flight. He will be sentenced next month.



David Perrett: faces disciplinary hearing

By SHIRLEY ENGLISH

TRASHING a hotel room, swearing at staff or picking a fight with a waiter used to be the preserve of the rich and famous. Now the trend for behaving badly appears to have filtered down to the ordinary man and woman. No longer satisfied with shouting abuse at fellow motorists or air travellers, the public is taking its frustration out on hotel staff.

According to a conference organised by Strathclyde Police in Glasgow yesterday, hotel rage is the latest manifestation of what psychologists see as evidence of a breakdown in social behaviour.

Hoteliers claimed their staff were increasingly having to cope with abusive and violent guests. Recent incidents included a barmaid having a glass smashed into her face after she refused to serve a customer and a fight involving 100 banqueting guests which "took half a small police force to bring to order".

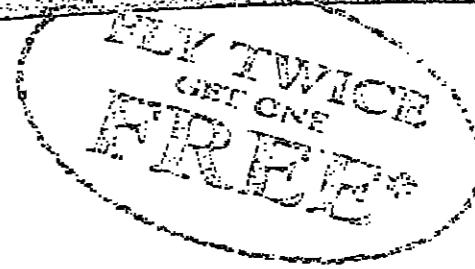
Michaela Longuey, a representative of Hotel Watch, a group that monitors behaviour in Glasgow, said: "At my hotel I have witnessed physical assault, armed robbery and have been threatened myself. People come to hotels and think they are anonymous and believe they can have any way they like."

PC Michael Greville, of Strathclyde Police, said there were no exact figures but on anecdotal evidence the problem appeared to be getting worse. "It is not just the punch in the face, it is the threats and intimidation staff suffer."

Bill Fox, whose company, Maybo, specialises in personal safety, was brought in by Strathclyde Police to advise hoteliers at the conference yesterday. He said the difficulties experienced by hotel staff were no different to those encountered by workers in other jobs in the service industry. "What people are saying now is that it's not acceptable and we are going to do something about the problem."

Leading article, page 19

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Abortion rise is linked to Pill scare

By IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE health scare four years ago over the contraceptive Pill is still causing a crisis of confidence among women, with the number of abortions continuing to rise, according to official figures released yesterday.

The figures show that many women remain clearly worried about the Pill and are prepared to risk an unwanted pregnancy rather than take it.

For five years before the 1995 scare the abortion rate fell but it has increased steadily for all age groups between 14 and 49 ever since, growing by 4 per cent last year alone. One pregnancy in five is now deliberately terminated.

Karen Dunnell, editor of *Health Statistics Quarterly* — a new publication from the Office for National Statistics, said that the rise in abortions was puzzling. "The conception rate has stopped going up and has now levelled off but the abortion rate goes on."

"I think there is a general feeling that the Pill scare caused a crisis of confidence among women in methods of contraception and that will not go away. It may be one of the

reasons that larger numbers of women are deciding to use abortion rather than the Pill."

The scare began in October 1995 after reports of clinical trials suggested that the latest type of oral contraceptive contained a type of progesterone that doubled the risk of blood clots forming in the veins.

Tens of thousands of the three million women who take the Pill in Britain stopped doing so overnight, with the result that there were 23,000 extra pregnancies over the next nine months and 10,000 of them were ended by abortion.

Even though later research has shown that the Pill is not a health risk, the conception rate has never fallen back to the level it was before the scare and the proportion of abortions has grown. There were 179,700 terminations in England and Wales in 1997, compared with 177,500 in 1996 and 163,600 in 1995.

Just under 21 per cent of all pregnancies are now ended by abortion — 2 per cent more than in 1995 — and there are 4,000 more conceptions per quarter than in the three

months immediately before the scare. The abortion rate is highest among 16 to 19-year-olds, with 26.7 terminations for each 1,000 women in that age group. The rate among those under 16 — the age of consent — is now 6.1 per 1,000, against 3.5 in 1971.

Close on 120,000 terminations a year are carried out on women in the 20 to 34 age group, almost three times as many as in all the other age groups combined. About 10,000 abortions a year are carried out on women coming from abroad, compared with more than 32,000 in 1971.

Life, the anti-abortion pressure group, blamed government policies for the continued rise in terminations. Angela Corless, the group's spokesman, said: "Abortion kills unborn children. Many of these aborted babies are able to feel pain and some of them are old enough to live outside the womb..."

"Abortion is a deplorable act. This 'service' is sold to women in a sophisticated way, is readily available and very well funded."

MRS JOLLY'S ANSWER TO THE MILLENNIUM HYPE

These are the words to *Through the Darkness of the Ages*, written by Hilary Jolly. The music was composed by Paul Bryan.

*Through the darkness of the ages,
Through the sorrows of the days,
Strength of weary generations,
Lifting hearts in hope and praise,
Light in darkness, joy in sorrow,
Presence to allay all fears.*

*Jesus, you have kept your promise,
Faithful through two thousand years.*

*Bounty of two thousand harvests,
Beauty of two thousand springs:
He who framed the times and seasons*

*Has vouchsafed us greater things.
Word of God who spoke creation
Speaks forgiveness, speaks to save,*

*Gathers still his ransomed people
In the life he freely gave.
Countless flowers have bloomed
and withered,*



*Countless hours are sealed in night,
Shattered thrones and fallen empires,
Realms and riches lost from sight.
Christ, your kingdom still increases
As the centuries unfold:
Gives that fell to earth and perished
Has brought forth ten thousandfold.*

*Master, we shall sing your praises,
Man of sorrows, God of power,
For the messiah has come.
Shall at last bring in the hour
When, as lightning starts the heavens,
You return to lead us home.
You have promised, 'Ten coming,
Swing, our Lord Jesus, come.'*



Mrs Jolly with her hymn in St Paul's yesterday

Amateur's hymn earns top praise

Ruth Gledhill meets the inspired cleaning lady who has won a millennium competition for a royal service

pleasant things that humanity comprises. I particularly dislike the fact that it seems to have as its centrepiece a giant human figure. The millennium is about man, it is not about God."

The competition was organised by Canon Michael Saward of St Paul's, the author of 80 hymns. The words and tune composed by the two runners-up will be included in a service at the cathedral on Saturday, January 8, arranged for young people, the voluntary sector and Londoners generally. The winning entries and runners-up are on the St Paul's website <http://stpauls.london.anglican.org>

words matched. The hymns were judged anonymously.

Mrs Jolly's words, which have won her a cut-glass rose bowl and £750, have been set to the winning tune by Paul Bryan, director of music at St John's College School, Cambridge. The hymn will be included in St Paul's service on Sunday, January 2, one of the four main millennium acts of worship in Britain on that day. Each will be attended by members of the Royal Family, although it has not yet been

announced which the Queen will attend.

Mrs Jolly, from Cambridge, a part-time domestic and church cleaning lady, is the daughter of a Methodist mother and a Plymouth Brethren father. She did not become a Christian until her mid-thirties after "one of those Damascus Roads experiences we're told not to expect".

She described her experience of composing hymns: "Walking my dog in the green places by the river on the edge

of Cambridge, with my head full of Scripture and music, juggling rhymes and wrestling with St Paul to turn his more prosaic pronouncements into poetry, has become life's greatest pleasure."

Her view of the millennium celebrations are less enthusiastic. "I am quite frankly sickened by the millennium hype that surrounds us. I think it is pagan and most unpleasant."

She singled out the Dome for particular criticism. "It is a temple to some of the least

Dixons

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Marine is stripped of his medal

A Royal Marine who kicked and punched a comrade at the funeral wake of a young corporal was fined £1,000 and stripped of his good conduct medal yesterday. John O'Connell, 40, now a civilian warehouseman, was a Warrant Officer Class 1 and the Marines' most senior bugler at the time. He lost his temper when a friend, while larking about, dropped a tie pin made in memory of those killed in the IRA bombing of the RM band's barracks at Deal, Kent. O'Connell admitted assault before a court martial.

Lure for students
British universities are trying to boost their share of the lucrative Australian postgraduate student market. The British Council has launched a campaign in Sydney aimed at increasing the number of fee-paying Australian students by 70 per cent in the next three years, to more than 3,000.

Car plates blitz
Police are to crack down on motorists who customise their car number plates, making them difficult to identify. Fines of up £1,000 could follow a warning. Lord Whitty, the Roads Minister, said: "These number plates are illegal and can hamper law enforcement."

Balloon delay
The launch of the all-British round-the-world ballooning attempt has been delayed until this morning, leaving more time for their only rivals to catch them up. Andy Elson and Colin Prescott discovered problems as their 19ft balloon was inflated in a golf course in Almeria, Spain.

Cocaine mishap
A girl aged three ate cocaine that she thought was sherbet after it was hidden in a discarded fridge outside her home in Newcastle upon Tyne. Hospital tests revealed no lasting ill effects. A couple unknown to the family were later remanded in custody on a drug-dealing charge.

Home from home
Housebuyers are spending up to a week in their cars for the chance to save £15,000 on a family home. The queue outside the sales office on a former Royal Navy housing estate at Crownhill, Plymouth, stretched 200 yards yesterday although the sale does not begin until Saturday.

Meningitis boy's parents may sue

By JOANNA BALE

THE parents of a boy who died of meningitis are considering legal action after he was sent home twice by doctors who diagnosed influenza.

Robbie Kennedy, 9, fell ill within minutes of arriving at his father's house after a football training session. Derek Kennedy, 34, an advertising agency manager, telephoned his GP but was told nobody could visit for three hours.

He and his estranged wife, Becky, 33, were so worried that they took Robbie to the Riverside clinic in Ipswich, which offers an out-of-hours service for local GPs.

Mr Kennedy said: "He was delirious with fever, had cold hands, a stiff neck, a high temperature and would not settle. The duty GP said he had all the signs of meningitis but it was very unlikely because Robbie was able to bend his back forward. He said it was more likely that he had flu and advised us to give him paracetamol, put him to bed and wipe him with a sponge. We asked if we should take him to hospital but we were told not to."

He said his son began to deteriorate rapidly after returning to his home in Rushmore, near Ipswich, on Friday. "I called my wife again and we contacted the clinic, which advised us to bring him in at 2am. He was examined by a different doctor but she would still not refer him to hospital.

The doctor told us to put him to bed. He was lying dead in bed when my wife checked on him at 8am on Saturday."

David Cocks, chief executive of Suffolk Doctors On Call, whose Ipswich base is at Riverside clinic, declined to comment on Robbie's death. He said: "We are a co-operative service representing 309 GPs in the county who take turns to be on call out of hours. All patients are seen by GPs."

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THE TIMES WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 17 1999

HOME NEWS 7

Winter in paradise? No thanks

We'd rather stay
in Yeovil, say
workers offered
Bahamas trip.

Simon de
Bruxelles reports

Rainy
cloudy
calm
foggy

GIVEN the choice between the palm-fringed beaches of the Bahamas and a wet winter in the West Country, most people would not think twice. But 19 technicians with Westland helicopters have turned down the chance to exchange the grey skies of Yeovil in Somerset for three months on an island described as a tropical paradise.

The technical and support staff were members of a 32-strong team due to depart last weekend for extended trials of the firm's new EH-101 Merlin helicopter. The 13 who went will spend three months on the island of Andros, which boasts eight hours sunshine a day and a February temperature of 25C. The island is famed for its powder-white beaches, its unique wildlife including iguanas and exotic birds, and its 140 miles of unspoilt coral reef. Back home in Yeovil, where the average February temperature is 8C, there is swimming in the municipal pool, the wildlife consists of stray dogs and urban foxes, and the only reefs are the rusting shopping trolleys in the River Yeo.

GKN Westland had hand-picked the support staff for the anti-submarine training and weapons trials due to take place on a US Navy weapons range. The members of the Manufacturing, Science and Finance union were offered a 10 per cent "hardship" allowance and given a brochure outlining their job and the working conditions. This gave a warning that the sojourn in the Bahamas would not be a holiday. Support staff would



GKN Westland's factory in Yeovil: management is finding it hard to entice staff away

be sharing quarters at the US Navy base on Andros and it pointed out that because there is no public transport on the island there would be little opportunity for sight-seeing.

One engineer said: "It sounds to me that we would be fried in the sun or eaten alive by jelly fish. It may sound great with all those beaches and coral reefs but we could be working 12-hour days and sleeping two in a room."

Terry Stone, the MSF's representative at GKN Westland, said:

"This is certainly not a holiday. It is three months with pretty sparse facilities. We are in negotiations about the best way to solve this problem but if I was asked there is no way I

would go. I don't like flying for starters and I am not too keen on boats." A spokeswoman for the Bahamas Tourist office said Andros was one of the most beautiful and least developed islands in the region.

She said: "Andros is paradise. It has some of the most beautiful beaches. It is a wonderful place to go snorkelling and scuba diving. I cannot imagine why anyone would not want to go to Andros, even to work, because when you finished your shift it would be lovely to relax there."

"The nightlife in Nassau is

only a 15-minute flight away and surely being in the Bahamas now must be better than being in the UK."

Chris Loney, GKN Westland's public affairs director, said: "The situation won't affect the development and introduction programme. I can understand some of the reasons for not going, they don't want to share rooms because of a lack of privacy. But there is not a lot we can do in the way of alternative facilities at the base. The options open to us

now are to look for staff who want to go or to adjust the premium to make it satisfactory for those who won't go."

"We have been in discussion on the terms for some time but there are still 19 who are unsatisfied with the premium and conditions offered to them. It does seem like a great job and I think if I had the chance to go I probably would. The idea of getting a suntan in February is very appealing but it is horses for courses really and everybody is different."



Not that tempting: the white beaches and eight hours of sunshine a day on Andros

Couple sue over two failed vasectomies

By PAUL WILKINSON
NORTH WEST
CORRESPONDENT

A FATHER of three who had two more children in spite of two vasectomies is suing the hospital that carried out the operations.

Thomas Brennan, the consultant who performed both operations, said the chances of it failing were about 3,000:1 but it was unheard of for it to fail twice. "To my knowledge this has never happened," he said.

Yesterday John Pickett, 47, a computer programme manager with BT, and his wife, Pauline, 41, a clinical psychologist, brought an action at the High Court in Leeds for compensation against St James's Hospital, Leeds. They want the money to provide care for Louise-Charlotte, 7, and Emily, 4, born as a result of the failed vasectomies. The couple, from Roundhay, Leeds, have another three daughters of their own and an adopted son. Mr Pickett would not accept that Emily was his until tests proved it.

The hearing continues.

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BA frying the flag

BRITISH AIRWAYS is cooking up a plan to open a chain of restaurants!

While travellers used to in-flight meals might scoff at the departure, BA are sure it will take off.

The airline has hired Roy Ackerman - owner of London's posh restaurants Chez Nico and the Gay Hussar - to help it into the down-to-earth food and drink market.

BA is well on the way to finalising plans for a 15,000 sq ft pilot scheme in London's former County Hall, and is considering opening other restaurants around the

country. It hopes to give diners dishes whose ingredients have been flown into Britain on a BA flight earlier in the day.

One project manager said: "It's great to know that the lobster you are eating in London was flown in from New England that morning."

Bosses are hoping the project will free some much-needed cash into the airline.

Last week BA nose-dived into the red for the first time since privatisation in 1987 by reporting losses of £75 million for the last three months of 1998.

Daily Star 15 February

Restaurants by BA!

What next?

The King Herod Nursery School?...

The Robert Maxwell Pension Fund?... or perhaps...

The Bill Clinton Finishing School for Young Ladies!

Airlines and Good Food have always been a contradiction in terms. Research has shown that people don't like airline food. So given a choice, why would anybody pay good money to eat food prepared by British Airways?

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Scary
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Police finger the Stone Age potter

By DALYA ALBERGE
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

THE cast of a Neolithic finger has helped a museum to solve a 5,000-year-old mystery: Stone Age man's fingerprints were the same as our own.

The discovery would not have been possible without the help of the City of London Police. They were called in to help the Museum of London's inquiries into a sizeable fragment of pot that entered the museum's collection in 1914 after it was dredged up from the Thames near Mortlake, to the southwest of the capital.

The pot's Stone Age maker had decorated it with crescent-shaped indentations around the rim by prodding a finger into the wet clay. When experts took a cast of the holes with silicone rubber, they found a fingerprint and the impression of a particularly thick and badly chipped nail.

Michael Crockett, the police fingerprints officer, said: "This is so far away from my normal



Michael Crockett, the fingerprints officer, with the pot

sphere of work, which is trying to chase criminals. To find something left 5,000 years ago is extremely rewarding. To find any fingerprint gives you a buzz."

The structure of Neolithic fingerprints, it emerged, was no different from our own, with ridges flowing from one side of the finger to the other.

Simon Thurley, the museum's director, said the fingerprint provided another clue as

to what prehistoric man looked like. What we could learn from skeletons was limited because so few of the bones had survived. "Did their flesh look like ours? What did their fingernails look like? This puts the flesh on the bones."

The pot — on display at the museum until Sunday — may have been made for domestic use. Jon Cotton, curator of prehistory at the museum, said that because it was found by a woman or a child.

He added that the fingerprint discovery "opens up another avenue of inquiry", prompting researchers to rethink the image of Neolithic man as primitive.

Such pots were built of ropes of clay joined together and perhaps decorated by more than one member of a family: they might have been passed around a camp fire to while away an evening. Unlike this example, the decoration was usually made with sticks or bones.

Although the police used a high-intensity light source to raise the ridges on the surface, there was not enough information to form any picture of the individual. The small size of the nail and the print suggest that it may have been made by a woman or a child.



The silicon rubber cast showed that fingerprints have not changed in 5,000 years

PC 'hit to floor' at Lawrence inquiry

A POLICE officer told a court yesterday that he was punched to the ground as members of the Nation of Islam tried to storm the Stephen Lawrence inquiry last year.

PC Stephen Dukamp said they attempted to force entry on the day five men suspected of being involved in the teenager's death were due to give evidence. As police struggled to keep order in the foyer there was a short-lived "explosion of violence".

PC Dukamp told Southwark Crown Court in London: "At least three of the Nation of Islam came on top of me. I felt a punch in the shoulder followed by several other blows to my head and body. I was then punched to the floor. Another officer to my left was being punched."

The officer said he was able to arrest his attacker, Rasali Yesutu-Muhammad. "I repeated to him that he was under arrest for assault and violent disorder." Mr Yesutu-Muhammad, from Northolt, West London, denies affray on June 29 last year. The case continues.

Triads are cashing in on credit card fraud

By STEWART TENDLER
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

CHINESE triad gangs are being linked in an explosion in credit card fraud. Losses involving British cardholders jumped from £9.6 million in 1994 to £26 million last year.

Details taken from cards used in shops or restaurants in Britain are sent to the Far East in minutes and transferred onto fake cards. The fakes are used on the same day.

Sophisticated fakes carrying details of foreign consumers are also brought into Britain and account for a further £13 million a year in losses, which have to be met by the credit card companies.

Couriers known as "mules" carry the forged cards into Britain. They are controlled by a senior member of the gang known as a "jockey" and are sent on shopping sprees to buy luxury goods that are exported to the Far East for resale.

Wayne Smith, head of the National Criminal Intelligence Service specialist crime unit, said yesterday that detectives had traced gangs moving across Europe buying designer goods and jewellery. Triad members had also been found in Britain using specialist equipment to make fake cards.

Hotel will score softly with fans of United

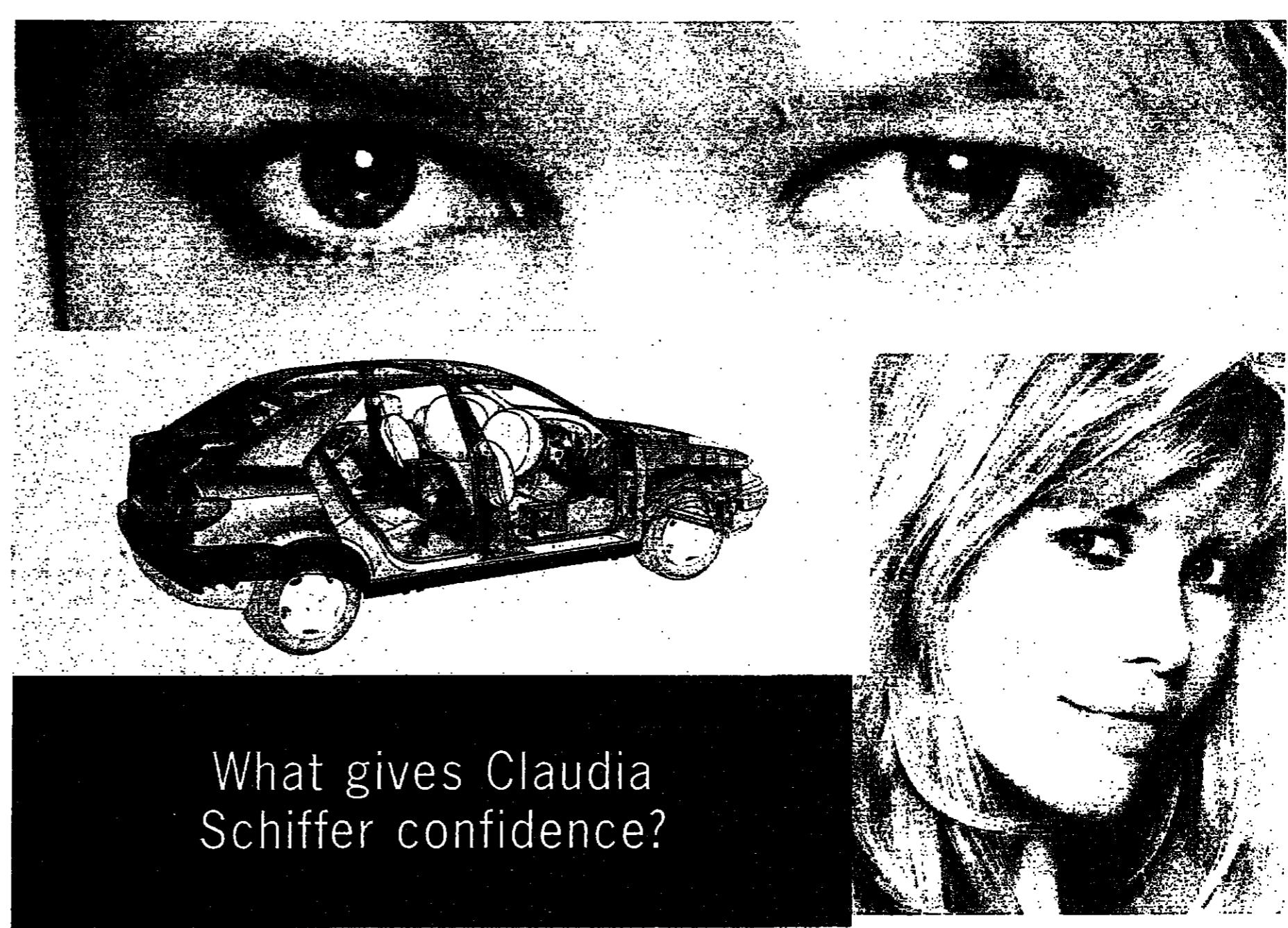
By RUSSELL JENKINS
NORTH WEST CORRESPONDENT

THE television chef Gary Rhodes is a big Manchester United fan. But he balked at the prospect of serving the club's own-brand champagne and red wine in the brasserie that bears his name at the official Manchester United hotel, which opened yesterday.

Likewise the 111 bedrooms of the three-star hotel, newly completed at a cost of £5 million at Water's Reach, only a free kick away from Old Trafford, are mercifully free of Eric Cantona portraits or other United-related themes.

The average business traveller could be forgiven for thinking he was staying at any other modern, comfortable, mid-price rival. The Quality Hotel, Manchester, is not even named after United.

But they should be warned that it is likely to be fully booked either side of match days by supporters who want to wake up and see the towering north stand from their bedroom window. The hotel, 25 per cent owned by the club, is already heavily booked, at £98.50 for an executive twin room, for tonight's Premiership clash against Arsenal.



What gives Claudia Schiffer confidence?



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Could it be her body? After all, the Xsara does come with a safety cell reinforced with a ring of steel. Could it be her airbags? Knowing that you and your passenger are enveloped with both front and side airbags is enough to give anyone confidence. Could it be her side profile? In the event of a collision, an energy-absorbing side-impact protection system helps to transfer the force of the impact away from the occupants. Or could it be her rear?

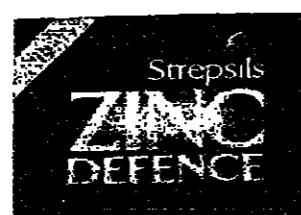
Extra reassurance comes in the form of the well renowned programmed rear-wheel steering designed to help you avoid trouble in the first place. Impressive attributes instead. Made even more impressive when you consider the vital statistics. 3 years' 0% finance is available with only a 20% deposit, with prices starting at £11,840. For more information call 0800 282 262 and we'll be happy to tell you more. Well, if you've got it, flaunt it.



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Xsara prices start from £11,840 on the road. Car shown Xsara 1.6 16V EXCLUSIVE, £16,170 on the road (excludes optional metallic paint, £255). On the road prices include 14% VAT, delivery, number plate, 12 monthly road fund duty and £25 government first registration fees. 3 years' 0% finance available on all Xsara models. Typical finance example based on Xsara 1.6 16V on the road price, £11,840 deposit, 10% 20% 36 monthly payments of £2,000. Total £72,000. Payable £11,840. Customer APR, 9%. Finance available to over 18s only and subject to status. A guarantee may be required. Written quotations on request from Citroën Finance, Vernon House, Sicilian Avenue, London WC1R 0QH. Finance offer applies to retail registrations of new Xsara models ordered and registered between 1.12.98 and 31.3.99. Prices correct at time of going to press. Passenger and lateral airbags standard on models built after

A hectic lifestyle and not always sticking to a sensible diet could make you more susceptible to nasty cold viruses. New Zinc Defence's advanced formula helps support your immune system's resistance to infection.



HELPING YOU FIGHT OFF COLDS.

Pro-euro Tories boosted by poll

By JAMES LANDALE
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

BREAKAWAY pro-European Tories could win seats in this summer's Euro-elections after a MORI poll showed that a pro-single currency Conservative grouping could secure about 11 per cent of the vote.

Under the new system of proportional representation being used in eleven multi-member regions, this would be enough votes for the group to secure at least one seat in each region where they put up candidates.

The research was commissioned by Brendan Donnelly and John Stevens, two MEPs who resigned from the Tory party last month to form the Pro-euro Conservative Party.

Some 52 per cent of respondents said they would vote Labour, 26 per cent Tory. But when asked how they would vote if breakaway Conservatives formed a pro-euro party, only 20 per cent said they would back William Hague. 11 per cent said they would vote for the pro-euro party.

Labour 'torn apart' by Welsh feuding

SENIOR Labour MPs yesterday moved to prevent the Welsh party descending into civil war after the result next weekend of the bitterly divisive ballot on who should head the Cardiff assembly.

The group of leadership loyalists urged activists to bury their differences after Saturday's decision as one leading MP said the party had been 'torn apart' by the campaign between Alun Michael and Rhodri Morgan.

It emerged last night that if he wins, Mr Michael will move immediately to offer his rival a job in the Principality's new administration. However, the Michael camp was hit by last-minute jitters after concerns that the GMB's expected support would fail to materialise. Mr Morgan's supporters were claiming strong support from GMB members in local consultations.

The manoeuvring paved the way for an edgy final 48 hours' campaigning before the result is officially declared. The divisions have been emphasised by charges that Mr Michael, the Welsh Secretary and Tony Blair's favoured candidate, is being imposed by the Labour leadership.

Welsh party grandees — Paul Murphy, the Northern Ireland Minister,

Kim Howells, Trade and Industry Minister, Alan Howarth, Minister for Arts, and Don Topham, chairman of the Welsh group of MPs — called for unity. "We hope that the party will accept the result on Saturday. When the result is known we have to put this leadership contest behind us and concentrate on winning a Labour majority in the assembly," they said.

The statement was also signed by the MPs Sir Ray Powell and Llew Smith. A similar exercise by North Wales MPs was led by Barry Jones and Gareth Thomas. The moves were seen as a sign of the divisions. One senior loyalist said: "The party has been torn apart. It has been personally virulent. Alun Michael, if he wins, has a very big job to do in trying

to build up the grass roots." Mr Michael's supporters believe their man is shading the race, but Mr Morgan's camp point out that the great unknown in the electoral arithmetic is the constituency section, making up a third of the final result. Polls show it is running three-to-one in favour of Mr Morgan.

However, Mr Michael was hanging on to the GMB result, with Mr Morgan's supporters claiming that members had supported him by four-to-one in regions where there had been a ballot.

Although the votes are not binding on the GMB leadership, there were signs last night that Alan Garley, the GMB regional secretary, may delay the result until Friday. There was even speculation that the union, which represents 6.2 per cent of the final vote, could abstain, which would be a severe blow to Mr Michael.

Mr Morgan was buoyed by votes from a branch ballot of the shopworkers union USDAW, and backing from the Transport Salaried Staffs Association and the builders' union, UCATT.

John Shorridge, 51, director of economic affairs in the Welsh Office, was yesterday named as Permanent Secretary to the assembly.



Tony Banks, the Minister for Sport, competing in a pancake-tossing race in aid of Rehab UK, a charity for the disabled, in Westminster yesterday

£30m to upgrade casualty units

By JILL SHERMAN
CHIEF POLITICAL
CORRESPONDENT

MORE than £30 million is to be spent on hospital casualty departments to shorten waiting times, improve privacy and security and buy modern equipment. Tony Blair announced yesterday.

One in three accident and emergency departments are to get grants from the Department of Health's £1 billion modernisation fund, which is also funding the nurses' pay award. An experienced consultant with expertise in A&E services will also be appointed to lead a team spearheading a national drive for improvements in all casualty departments.

Visiting North Hampshire Hospital in Basingstoke yesterday, the Prime Minister said the money would go on 80 different schemes in 70 hospitals, including better facilities for children, for resuscitation and reducing the number of patients forced to wait on trolleys for treatment.

Iceland. The only Supermarket in Britain that has banned Frankenstein Food

A year ago we became extremely worried about the tide of genetically modified ingredients secretly working their way into British food.

Research showed that, while the food authorities were unconcerned, our customers were as worried as us.

Last May we decided to trust our customers' instincts and banned genetically modified ingredients from all Iceland own label products.

We did it to give our customers a choice about the food they eat. And this is a real choice since Iceland sells just about everything these days, not just frozen.

Of course, there is no conclusive evidence that GM foods are dangerous to human health. However, we are taking no chances. We like to say that if the Body Shop doesn't test on animals we won't test on humans, and let's face it GM food is a massive experiment.

So, if the GM food crisis worries you, there is something you can do about it today. Shop with Iceland.

And if the whole issue makes you angry, sign our in-store petition calling for a five year freeze on GM food while you are there.

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For more information on the GM issue or Iceland's stance call our genetic hotline on 0990 133373 or pick up a leaflet in store.

Beware tax returns by politicians

Taxes and truth seldom go together. Figures are distorted, claims exaggerated and the underlying tax and spending dilemma facing all governments is ignored. So when the Tories launch a campaign calling for honesty in taxation, scepticism is in order.

Nonetheless, Francis Maude, the Shadow Chancellor, has hit one of his two targets, while curiously ignoring another. Mr Maude argues that Labour gave a misleading impression of its tax plans before the last election.

Gordon Brown's repeated pledge that Labour would not raise the basic and higher rates of income tax, and would not extend VAT, allowed him plenty of leeway on other tax rises, as a number of us pointed out at the time.

Claims by Tony Blair and the Chancellor that they had "no plans to increase tax at all" and "our proposals do not involve raising taxes" may have been technically correct since firm plans did not exist, apart, mainly, from the windfall levy on utilities. But Mr Brown and his advisers knew before the election that other tax increases were likely, if not certain, to be needed, and they did dislodge their probable intentions.

Since May 1997 we have had the tax on the dividend income of pension funds, reductions in mortgage tax relief and the married couples' allowance (carrying on where the Tories left off), bigger rises in excise duties than had been previously planned, and increases in taxes on business. Mr Maude has a fair point in describing these as stealth taxes, though Mr Brown might regard this as a compliment.

The Tories have gone on to argue that, as a result, the tax burden is rising quickly under Labour. The burden, defined as net taxes and social security contributions, has shifted money from the middle class to expand help for the poor. But no Chancellor, or Shadow Chancellor, is very candid about taxes.

Peter RIDDELL

ON POLITICS

This does not, of course, mean that Labour has somehow been more successful in holding the tax burden: instead, its increases have been offset by the buoyancy of national income. All this shows how tricky it is to hold down the tax burden. Mr Maude argues that "one of the great mistakes of the last Conservative Government was to fail to explain vigorously enough that there is also a strong social case for lower taxes. If people are taxed less, they are able to do more, not just for themselves but for their families and their communities."

But how? It is no good willing lower taxes without saying how the state is to become smaller. Which services and welfare commitments are to be shifted to the private sector? At present, Labour pretends that public services can be improved without raising the taxes of ordinary people (when they are, in fact, being raised by stealth), while the Tories pretend it is possible to have lower taxes without cutting back on core public and welfare services (when the tax burden is very hard to cut).

Curiously, Mr Maude has not yet made much of the redistributive aspect of Labour's policies. Mr Brown's various tax increases, coupled with abandonment of universal benefits, and the introduction of student fees, have shifted money from the middle class to expand help for the poor. But no Chancellor, or Shadow Chancellor, is very candid about taxes.

Business Direct Interest Rates Change

With effect from Tuesday 16th February 1999

The Co-operative Bank Business Direct Account

Credit Interest will be as follows:

Balance	Gross AER%	Gross %	Net AER%	Net %
£2,000+	0.87	0.87	0.70	0.70
£25,000+	1.51	1.50	1.20	1.20
£100,000+	2.52	2.50	2.01	2.00
£250,000+	4.59	4.50	3.65	3.60

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Serbs must go or we fight on, says rebel chief

A KEY commander in the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) yesterday dismissed the possibility of disarming or disbanding his guerrilla forces as part of any negotiated settlement that stopped short of giving full independence to the southern Serbian province.

"Zone commanders such as myself are members of the General Staff," said the fighter, known as Commander Remi, one of the most senior KLA officers remaining in Kosovo. "We obey our orders, but the General Staff is fighting for the freedom of Kosovo, so we don't expect orders to disarm or disband. We'll put our weapons in warehouses only when we have liberated Kosovo."

Commander Remi is in charge of the most vital of the seven KLA operational zones which divide Kosovo. Included in his area of responsibility is the municipality of the provincial capital, Pristina, as well as the vital highway running north which connects Kosovo to Serbia. Though only 27, the former law student, who interrupted his studies to fight, has previous combat experience gained in the Yugoslav Special Forces during the Croatian war in 1991.

US envoy has crisis talks with Milosevic

FROM TOM WALKER IN RAMBOUILLET

THE American mediator of the Kosovo peace talks, Chris Hill, flew to Belgrade last night for emergency discussions with President Milosevic of Yugoslavia.

Earlier his exasperated colleagues had reminded both the Serbs and ethnic Albanians that the policing and military aspects of the deal on offer, including the Nato "Kfor" implementation force, were non-negotiable. The Serbs yesterday submitted written comments on progress so far, which prompted Mr Hill's shuttle to Belgrade. Western of-



Nothing short of independence will do, a defiant Kosovo guerrilla commander tells Anthony Loyd in Lapastica

His fighters have the best record of any in the KLA. Well armed and equipped, they have encroached to within 500 yards of the arterial road north and have held their ground against repeated Serb counter-attacks.

Ironically, 80 per cent of their weaponry, which includes grenade-launchers, mortars and fire-and-forget anti-tank systems, they have bought from mafia gangs inside Serbia. "The Serbs who sell to us are the clever ones," one of Commander Remi's deputy commanders declared.

"They profit from what is inevitable. That is a wiser thing to do than come here and die."

Speaking with succinct articulation at his headquarters in Lapastica, an ethnic Albanian village 21 miles north of Pristina, Commander Remi appeared well briefed on developments from the stumbling peace efforts at Rambouillet.

Key defence points of

deal being discussed by negotiators in France — among them a five-man KLA delegation — include not only the destruction of the KLA as a military force but the re-creation of a Kosovo police force with Serb as well as ethnic Albanian membership, and a shared defence policy with Serbia. According to Commander Remi, none of these points is negotiable. "The KLA is getting stronger by the day," he said. "I am hoping that we will be accepted by the international community just as our representatives have been accepted at Rambouillet.

Rejecting the idea of an autonomous region, the zone commander stipulated: "Freedom means not only the withdrawal of police and military forces from Yugoslavia, but the constitution of a new state with a new system as Albanians wish. And as far as unification with Albania? It's an ongoing process, but a slow one."

Paradoxically, the Rambouillet talks seem to be reounding not on the KLA's refusal to accept the terms offered to them in France — for the negotiations have not progressed far enough even to touch on these issues — but on Belgrade's refusal to accept Nato's position on its soil.

Beyond the failure of negotiations in France, the escalation of war into Kosovo's towns and ultimate victory, Commander Remi was also considering his own future. The man with cold, one-dimensional blue eyes, a face grey and drawn with lines suggesting at least an extra decade to his youth, wants to return to the study of law.

"My ambition is to go to

Tirana and finish my last year at the faculty studying. But my intentions to take care of our army may never let me go," he said.

Officials speculated that he was hoping to win Mr Milosevic's consent to the political aspects of the deal, leaving aside military and policing "annexes".

The Serbs made it clear yesterday that allowing Nato into Kosovo unopposed, and the withdrawal of almost 15,000 special police, are unacceptable. Kosovo Liberation Army representatives are appalled that their people's army will disappear under Nato supervision. Saturday's deadline for a deal is fast approaching, with US, Russian and Austrian mediators still frustrated.

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Dufour arriving at the court yesterday

Tainted blood victim attacks Fabius

FROM SUSAN BELL
IN PARIS

AS THE tainted blood trial entered its second week yesterday, a victim of the scandal accused Laurent Fabius, the former Prime Minister, of failing to destroy blood stocks contaminated by HIV, the AIDS-related virus.

Sylvie Rony, who appeared in court in a wheelchair attended by two nurses, was infected with contaminated blood on August 2, 1985, as she gave birth to her first child.

"Not ordering the destruction of the stock was not a political error, it was a crime," she said.

M. Fabius replied that he had "no comment on such profound suffering".

The families of thousands of victims who contracted AIDS after receiving tainted blood from the national transfusion service have been joined by the media in criticising the handling of the case by Christian Le Gouellec, president of the court trying M. Fabius and two former Health Ministers, Georgina Dufour and Edmond Hervé, for manslaughter.

Yesterday the victims lodged a complaint accusing him of partiality after he refused to allow them to join the hearings as civil parties. The judge had dismissed them as "passers-by" who had no place at the trial.

The right-wing *Le Figaro* questioned whether Judge Le Gouellec should be replaced by a "more pugnacious" president. Despite a distinguished legal career, the judge has been accused of incompetence. Claims against him include failing to acquaint himself with the facts and favouritism in his treatment of the accused.

Fugitive Mengel 'took holidays in Switzerland'

Jews furious that Angel of Death made postwar visits to Europe on Red Cross passport, writes Christopher Walker

JOSEF MENGELE, the notorious Nazi war criminal who escaped arrest at the end of the Second World War by fleeing to South America, returned to Switzerland many times to take holidays and visit his family, apparently with the knowledge of the local police.

The disclosures – about alleged Swiss links towards the activities of wanted Nazis – have shocked Jews around the world. They were contained in the latest issue of the Zurich-based Jewish weekly, *Israelitische Wochenblatt*, based on official documents not due to be made public until 2009.

The German-language publication claimed that Mengel – known as the "Angel of Death" because of the genetic medical experiments he conducted on Jews, including twins and dwarfs, in Auschwitz – used a fake Red Cross passport to take frequent trips to Switzerland in the 1950s, at one time staying in 1956 at an Alpine hotel called The Angel in the central Swiss resort of Engelberg.

The paper disclosed that Mengel also used his false identity to spend an extended holiday at a flat rented by his wife in a Zurich suburb and to pay a number of visits to his son, who was studying at a private boarding school in the affluent town of Montreux.



Mengele the SS doctor in wartime uniform.

German fund to aid Nazi victims

Berlin: Gerhard Schröder, the German Chancellor, and German big business yesterday announced plans to compensate Nazi Holocaust survivors and about 800,000 Eastern Europeans who worked as slave labourers in Hitler's Third Reich (Tony Paterson writes). The project, entitled Founda-

tion Initiative of German Business, was unveiled after a meeting of business leaders and Herr Schröder in Bonn and is backed by 17 banks and firms, including Deutsche Bank, Krupp and Volkswagen. But officials refused to specify how much would be available for compensation.

Herr Schröder said the fund would create a foundation to counter legal claims, especially class action suits in the US. The issue was brought to a head earlier this month following disclosures that Deutsche Bank co-financed the building of the notorious Nazi death camp at Auschwitz.

Yuri Shekochikhin, the MP, wrote in the *Novaya Gazeta* newspaper, where he is deputy editor, that the Government of the northern republic of Komi had moved \$10 million (£6.1 million) to an account in Luxembourg with plans to move up to \$21 million over a number of years.

He also said that a company which had close links to Mr. Yeltsin bought a controlling interest in a Komi oil company after putting pressure on the Danish owners of the shares to sell. Some of the profits from sales of Komi's oil, which rightly should go back to the region, have thus disappeared into private hands.

According to Mr. Shekochikhin, the Yeltsin family is implicated in the oil deal and that is why the Government has not prevented Komi officials moving the money.

The Central Bank said it could neither confirm nor deny that it approved the deal. The scandal broke only days after the former head of the Russian Central Bank admitted moving millions of pounds of currency reserves to an account in Jersey. No further details have emerged since the initial news of the "scam", which could prove the worst of post-Soviet shocks.



The Auschwitz "monster" in the 1970s, shortly before his reported death in Brazil

difficulty entering or leaving, even though it is alleged that the alias of "Helmut Greger" was already known to the police all over Europe.

A spokesman for the International Committee of the Red Cross stressed that during the period when the false travel document was issued "the organisation was entrusted with the task of helping tens of thousands of people in distress. We issued 70,000 passports, and were not always able to efficiently establish the identity of all those seeking our help. We apologise for the pain we caused Holocaust survivors and beg for their forgiveness".

The Zurich weekly charged that the Swiss police knew of the flat in a Zurich suburb rented by Mengele's wife, where he took an extended vacation in 1961.

Mr. Alfon wrote: "The Swiss police knew of the flat and followed Mengele while he was there. Their failure to arrest him was apparently a bureaucratic mishap."

"The Swiss Justice Ministry waited for an official extradition request from Germany, but by the time that this arrived, Mengele was on his way back to South America. The Swiss policemen following him did nothing to detain the Nazi criminal, instead contenting themselves with

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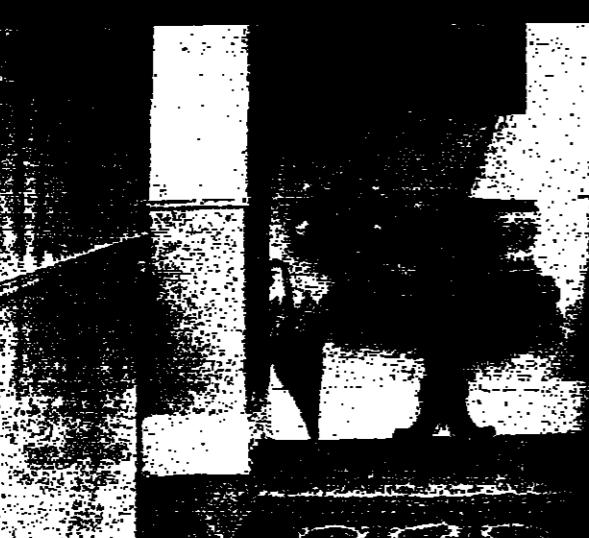
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Yeltsin accused of oil deal scandal

FROM ALICE LAGNADO
IN MOSCOW

RUSSIA has been hit by another corruption scandal after a liberal MP accused President Yeltsin's family of turning a blind eye to the transfer of millions of dollars out of one of its republics.

Yuri Shekochikhin, the MP, wrote in the *Novaya Gazeta* newspaper, where he is deputy editor, that the Government of the northern republic of Komi had moved \$10 million (£6.1 million) to an account in Luxembourg with plans to move up to \$21 million over a number of years.

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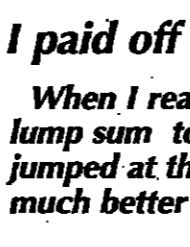
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05/1999

Map of Canada is redrawn by a land where polar bear is king

ACROSS a vast swath of the Canadian North, voters have turned out on foot, skis and snowmobiles in an election to create the country's first new regional assembly for half a century.

The territory of Nunavut, stretching from the northern shores of Hudson Bay to the arctic wastes of Ellesmere Island, is twice the size of Ontario, but with a population of just 25,000 — 85 per cent of which is Inuit.

Their new representatives have almost no political experience, but still hope for a new

Victory for Inuits has created a vast new territory, writes Giles Whittell

era in the governance of North America's native peoples.

Nunavut stretches across three time zones, but does not have a single road outside its 26 isolated communities. With 22 per cent unemployment and a suicide rate six times the national average, its social problems have defeated the Canadian federal Government for decades and present the world's youngest regional de-

velopment on Frobisher Bay. There, on April 1, Nunavut will separate from the Northwest Territories, of which it has been the impoverished half since Canada devoted its energies to the mineral-rich west at the turn of the century.

"As part of the Northwest Territories, the specific needs of Inuits in Nunavut weren't recognised," Annette Bourgeois, of the *Nunatsiavut News* in Iqaluit, told *The Times*. "In the west they have roads and mines. Now the Nunavut representatives will be able to focus on our problems." Mon-

day's election, in a land where polar bears often outnumber voters, was a triumph for Inuit activists who have been pressing the Government with ancestral land claims since the 1970s. But it was a victory for no particular party, since none of the 71 candidates pledged allegiance to any.

Among the first duties of the 19 winners, who include a truck driver, a hunter and several entrepreneurs, will be the election of a Cabinet and regional premier from among their number. Goo Arlooktoo, a former justice minister of Canada.



Jury hears of Texan's hate-filled tattoos

FROM DAMIAN WHITWORTH IN JASPER, TEXAS

SHORTLY after his arrival at the rural back-road where a decapitated body had been discovered by local people on their way to church, the Jasper County sheriff, Billy Rowles, found a piece of evidence that revealed just what it was that he was dealing with. "Once we looked at the KKK emblem on the cigarette-lighter we really started having some bad thoughts," he said.

A packed courthouse in this small east Texas town heard yesterday that the lighter belonged to John William "Bill" King, a white supremacist "full of hate" who pleaded not guilty to charges of kidnapping and murdering James Byrd because he was black.

In a case that has reawakened fears over extreme racism in the South, Mr King, 24, and his friends, Lawrence Brewer, 31, and Shawn Berry, 24, are accused of delivering a ferocious beating to Mr Byrd and then chaining him to the back of a pick-up truck and dragging him along a rough road until his head was sheared off.

The pick-up is the favourite means of transport in this logging country, but there was still astonishment when Mr King was delivered to the county courthouse in a vehicle similar to the one in which he had been early on June 7 last year.

He was wearing a bullet-proof jacket as he was led through a cordon of police. He also wears a sun belt capable of delivering a 50,000-volt shock if he misbehaves.

It was not possible to see the racist tattoos which cover his

body, but the prosecutor, Guy Gray, said that they include swastikas, a man in a hood, a black man being lynched and the word Satan.

"This is a young man filled with hate. These are the kind of tattoos that will reflect and tell you the deep-seated anger and hatred that this man has."

Mr King had drafted a constitution and membership literature for a "hate group" he intended to found in Jasper called the Texas Rebel Soldiers Division of the Confederate Knights of America. "King needed to do something dramatic to ... gain respect for his new gang and to attract new members," said Mr Gray.

Mr Byrd was identified, the prosecutor said, by his finger-prints, and a post-mortem examination showed that he had been alive when the dragging began. Markings were absent from parts of his face and head but his elbows were torn to shreds. Mr Gray said that forensic tests found Mr Byrd's blood on the wheels of Mr Berry's pick-up truck and on shoes belonging to all three of the accused.

The sheriff, Mr Rowles, said that when he arrived at the scene he thought Mr Byrd had been killed accidentally by being knocked down and caught underneath the truck.

But when he examined the brown trail on the road he noticed that it often ran on either side of the tyre tracks, indicating that the body had been dragged, swinging from side to side behind, not under, the truck. "I knew we were in trouble," he said.

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Natasha Richardson, left, has teamed up with Anna Wintour from *Vogue* to collect 55 Oscars outfits for an Aids auction. Kate Winslet, far right, has offered her 1998 gown.

Aids researchers have designs on Oscar outfits

Stars are donating their gowns for auction, Lisa Armstrong writes

THE Bob Mackie dress worn by Cher in 1972; the violet gown dyed by the costume mistress Edith Head to match Elizabeth Taylor's eyes in 1969; the lavender strapless vision that transformed Uma Thurman in 1994 ... they're all on show in the windows of Barney's — Manhattan's desperately chic department store.

Not quite the traditional Barney's fare of black and blacker, but the gowns are there for good reason. On March 18, Christie's New York is auctioning 55 Oscar Awards dresses to raise money for the American Foundation for Aids Research. The gowns will be on public view at Christie's in London next Tuesday and Wednesday and in Los Angeles from February 26 to March 1.

The brainchild of the actress Natasha Richardson, whose father Tony Richardson died of Aids, the auction was inspired by the sale of

gowns from the collection of Diana, Princess of Wales. "I thought, good on you — at least all those dresses aren't going to waste," she said. "And then I thought of all those incredible dresses which are created each year for the Academy Awards, all of which are too special to be discarded but which will never be worn again."

"I'm not a spokesperson, I'm an actress; that's what I'm comfortable being. But my dad died of Aids and I want to do whatever I can to help."

Collecting 55 Oscar Awards dresses from five decades and five continents was a tougher task than envisioned — Richardson was just finishing the award-winning off-Broadway version of *Cabaret* and beginning rehearsals for *Closer*, the play by the British writer

Patrick Marber which opens on Broadway later this month.

So she enlisted the help of Anna Wintour, the editor-in-chief of *American Vogue*, for whom "designer doors seem to mysteriously open".

And even then there were setbacks. The pair had only three months to pull everything together, and some of the dresses had mysteriously disappeared. "Everyone was very keen to be involved," Richardson said. "One of the first to say yes was Emma Thompson, who volunteered the Armani suit she wore to the Oscars in 1995 — and the shoes, the bag and the stole. Uma Thurman got back pretty quickly too, but then she wasn't sure where she'd misplaced her gown. You imagine all these beautiful dresses

would be meticulously catalogued, but that isn't always the case. Some go back to the designers. Joanne Woodward had already donated her dress to a museum and Ali MacGraw lost hers when her house burnt down."

The dresses were not always in pristine condition.

"Oscar night is a long one — sometimes nearly always steps on your train or something splits. A number of them need a little renovating," said Richardson, who has not donated her own Oscar outfit, a black Donna Karan that she wore to accompany Liam Neeson when he was nominated for *Schindler's List*.

No one is predicting how

much the auction will raise,

but the Barney's window display on Madison Avenue is creating a storm. Simon Doorman, the store's window-dresser said: "Women are going berserk when the walk past — they're practically foaming at the mouth."



Emma Thompson, left, and Kristin Scott-Thomas have offered the dresses they wore on Oscar night

Antiques dealers in grave thefts inquiry

FROM DAVID ADAMS IN MIAMI

NEW ORLEANS police have arrested members of a ring suspected of stealing more than 200 cemetery ornaments worth an estimated \$1 million (£613,000) from tombs belonging to some of the city's wealthiest families.

The investigation began when police traced the owner of a suspicious van spotted by a groundsman at Lake Lawn Metairie Cemetery. At the same time a former New Orleans resident noticed what appeared to be fragments of cemetery ornaments from his home city on sale in Los Angeles shops.

The police investigation has implicated several respected

antiques dealers who sold the stolen goods to wealthy collectors of graveyard Gothic in Los Angeles. The police say the theft began with a small group of heroin addicts who stole minor items from the cemeteries. But the dealers whom they sold items allegedly began ordering more lucrative ornaments, even giving the thieves art history lessons.

At least four prominent antique dealers were arrested after cemetery artefacts were discovered in their homes. All have been released pending a lengthy investigation, and have said they did not know the items had been stolen.

PRODUCT RECALL

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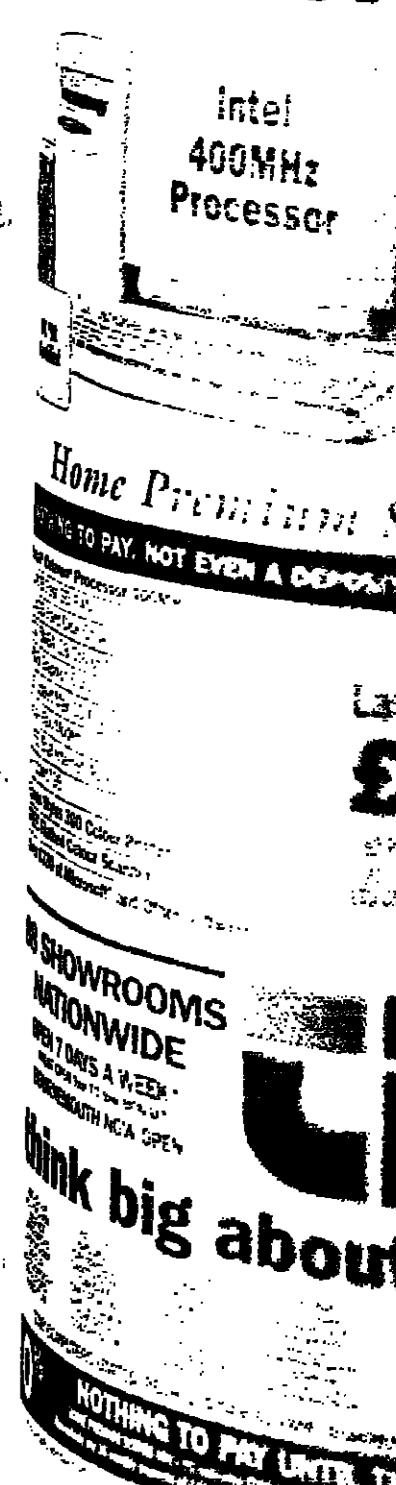
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A Stoic in search of a heart

Hague may have a steely exterior, but what lies beneath?

Having spent the best part of last week cheek by jowl with William Hague, I privilege normally only accorded to his wife, Fiona, and judo partner Seb Coe, I feel better equipped than most journalists to offer an insight into the character of the man who might be our next Prime Minister.

But only slightly better. Mr Hague is a very difficult man to get the measure of. Although I swigged Heineken with him at 30,000ft, followed in his footsteps around Harlem schools and shot the stratospheric breeze with him about Conservative philosophy, my conclusions about his character are still, just, provisional. At a time when the personal is increasingly political, and the Prime Minister shares the secrets of his diet with us to win our trust, Mr Hague gives little away.

The most striking aspect of Mr Hague's personality is his serenity. Margaret Thatcher liked to quote Kipling. Mr Hague embodies the stoic virtues of his verse. He treats triumph and disaster with the same, distanced, equanimity. Flipping through the press cuttings the day after his visit to school in East Harlem he barely betrayed a flicker of either pleasure or annoyance, however favourable or critical the coverage. One of his aides was more than a little irritated by *The Guardian's* coverage of the school trip, with its affected surprise that none of the Harlem schoolchildren was familiar with the Tory leader's achievements: "Never mind how many eight-year-olds in Harlem have never heard of William, how many of them have ever heard of *The Guardian*?" Mr Hague set the cuttings aside with scarcely a murmur and returned to his sandwiches.

Whether buffeted by the press, or typhoon-level turbulence over Virginia, the Tory leader remained imperturbable. Remarking on Mr Hague's calmness at the storm's centre, I was told by one of the team that his impassiveness was a constant: On the day of the greatest reverse to strike his leadership, the unveiling of the plot between Viscount Cranborne and Tony Blair, Mr Hague was informed of the treachery by a stammering Shadow Cabinet colleague. The unfortunate MP, who clearly felt like a Wehrmacht staff officer stumbling into the Führerbunker after von Stauffenberg's bomb had gone off, was met with studied calmness. "I suppose I'd better sack him, then," remarked Mr Hague, before resuming another progress through the sandwich tray.

This adamantine core might be considered a political asset, if a barrier to personal intimacy. But, curiously, it seems no impediment to a successful relationship with his wife. I fear, however, it may prove an obstacle in Mr Hague's wooing of the electorate.

The Tory leader has been criticised for not making more of his wife as an electoral asset, generally by those who have not always shown a tender interest in the party's fortunes. The motive behind



Michael Gove

But does the electorate? Mr Hague seems himself to sense that stoicism is not enough. He went to the United States looking for the secret of "compassionate conservatism". He travelled to the home of George Bush Jr, the vote-winning wizard of Austin, like the Tin Man looking for a heart. And although his emphasis on education and his new "values agenda" sounds as though it might be the missing organ, it still seems curiously bloodless.

Taking soundings after Mr Hague spoke in Washington, I found the audience impressed by his intellect but incapable of discerning the music of his soul. Mr Hague is an accomplished performer in the Commons, but his style is Classical, not Romantic.

The ersatz emoting of Tony Blair soon grates. Tories may consider that their hearts are not designed for easy display on their sleeves. But Mr Hague's own recognition that "The Tories can no longer win as 'the economics party'", the intuition that took him in his private jet to Texas, requires more from him than the stern virtues of the Stoic. In an emotionally literate age persuasion is more than a matter of logic. For compassionate conservatism to make sense, it must have passion at its heart.

Michael Gove
michael.gove@the-times.co.uk

'How long would it be, you wondered, until you sat down to a lunch from which you would rise with 12 fingers'

Alan Coren

I do hope you can find it in your heart to forgive me when I confess that, until a moment or two ago, I had not given much thought to genetic modification. I beg that forgiveness because, as a major commentator, I am charged with the duty to have a bit of a think about things on your behalf, sort out their constituent significances, come to a conclusion, and then type out the results so that you will not need to think about them for yourselves. Instead, you will be able to relax, eat a decent breakfast, do the crossword, catch your train, spend the day no longer distracted by whatever it is that I have sorted out but focused upon whatever it is you have to do, come back home, pour a large drink, put your feet up, eat dinner, watch a bit of telly, and when the time comes to climb the wooden steps to Bedfordshire, know that you will not

have to lie awake fretting about the thing I have now straightened out for you, and get a good night's sleep. Thanks to me, you may, quite literally, rest assured. That is what major commentators are here for.

So, since I know you will have been worrying for some time now about genetic engineering, I feel really bad about not having done the business. I should have been there for you when Dolly the sheep first materialised on your lunchtime news, because you suddenly found yourself scared witless over how long it might be before there was a Shane Warne bowling from both ends, and a Shadow Cabinet composed entirely of Ann Widdecombe. Nor, when you first saw that mouse with a huge human ear on its back, did I address the vexed question of whether all mice would soon be able to hear cats coming from five miles

away, and thus take over the world. I did not even speak up more recently when our great Prime Minister himself assured you that you needn't worry your pretty little heads about genetically modified foodstuffs, thereby confirming your suspicion that it could be only a matter of time before you sat down to a lunch from which you would stand up again with 12 fingers.

In, however, my defence, let me say that my silence sprang not from the dereliction of a major commentator's duty, but from a confidence that necessity would continue to be the mother of invention; so that our perception of probable consequences would itself be enough to empower us to manufacture the requisite antidotes. Were, that is,

the Aussies genetically to cobble an apparently unbeatable attack, the MCC response would be to clone 11 Bobcats: were our way of life to come under threat from a race of mice attuned to the pawfall of current cats, then men in white coats would immediately start popping sparrowhawk genes into moggy DNA to bring squadrons of feline stealths diving noiselessly out of the sun; and as for modified foods, we were surely at liberty to choose either to read the label first, or, a bit later, to deploy our providentially useful extra digits to knit modified gloves.

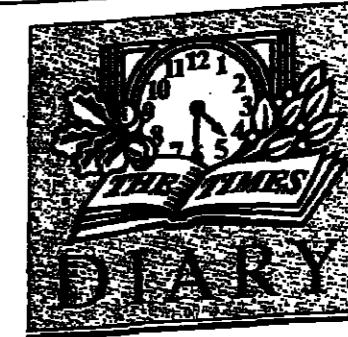
But all that was my complacent view up until, as I said, a moment ago — the moment in which I spotted that chilling news story about 70 of Britain's

GM test-sites which the Health and Safety Executive fears have taken inadequate safeguards against cross-pollination. In experimental furrows all across the country, the serried ranks of manipulated seedlings, tugged by February gusts, are unerringly fast. Even as I write, and you read, and we both tremble, strange mutant spores are bursting out of genetic chokey, flexing their freshly cobbled muscles and taking it on the breeze-blown lam. And summarily scattered with them are all those smug convictions about anticipation and antifade which allowed me to keep silent for so long.

We can envisage no probable consequences, now, nor therefore rely upon our inventiveness to cope with them: I glance down from the loft into my garden, and, look, the snowdrops are coming

up, exposing their pretty anthers for a vernal flirt. They do not know what a mistake that is. As the result, next year they might be plumbdrops. As to what that might do to the worms churning beneath, who can with any confidence say? They could end up greeting the millennium with big ears on their backs, and should they not work out what an ear does in time to save themselves from hungry birds, we may well see, before the decade's out, a giant starling hurtling in from the Pavilion End on four woolly legs, disguising his googly with his titter and whistling his low appeal through his dorsal beak.

What that you say? You want me, as a major commentator, to address this question so that you may rest easy in your bed tonight? Tough luck. The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind.



Screen test

BARBARA WALTERS is wooing the Prince of Wales. America's venerable question-popper has been fawning on Mark Bolland, HRH's surprisingly assertive deputy private secretary with responsibility for dealing with the press.

The two met at the Prince's 50th birthday party at Hampton Court, and during a visit to New York Mark Bolland was invited by Walters to dine at her home. They so warmed to one another, I am told, that the chat-show hostess is confident she will soon be able to persuade him to allow an interview.

Enticing the Prince on to her couch would be a coup for Babs because she failed to persuade Diana, Princess of Wales, to chat on screen. But if he agreed, he would be following in the footsteps of Baroness Thatcher, Richard Nixon and Monica Lewinsky.

• **CHRIS SMITH** seems not to have forgiven Gerald Kaufman for his withering report on the Royal Opera House. At yesterday's toping-out ceremony in Covent Garden, the Culture Secretary inaccurately to the chief of police in Liggett's *Le Grand Macabre* as Kaufman.

Hom alone

LIKE the Clintons, the Blairs have been exploiting their position to invite a celebrity chef round to cook. Last summer Tony and Cherie asked Ken Hom (below) to



turn their French holiday villa. But the PM was unable to tuck into Hom's stir-fry because he had to leave his missus and three kids rush back to Omagh after the bombing. So impressed was Cherie with Hom's talents that they visited his Imperial City at the weekend for seconds.

• **VISCOUNT LINLEY** has been signed up by the National Trust to lecture next week on furniture in London. His talk will be illustrated by the work of that noted cabinet-maker, D. Linley.

Blind side

STAR wars have broken out in Salisbury. Patrick Moore, the astronomer, has described as a "con trick" the plan by the Bishop of Salisbury, the Right Rev David Stangrove, to charge tourists £250 each to watch August's eclipse from the cathedral tower.

"Anyone who pays is crazy," says Moore. "The eclipse will not be total in Salisbury. You need to go to Devon or Cornwall." The Chapter House accepts Moore's criticism but says he is missing the point: "We are using eclipse hype to raise money for the cathedral. It will be more fun watching from the top of our tower than in the middle of thousands of people in some field."



• **PETER PORTER'S** argument for OUP to keep him and Dennis Enright, his fellow poet, on its list: "It agreed to keep publishing the dead poets. But it should hang on to us because we're nearly dead."

Wall flower

GILLIAN SHEPHERD has complained to the Speaker about ungentlemanly behaviour on her doorstep by Nick Brown and his chums. The Tory daffodil felt she received an "unprecedented insult" when he and some colleagues turned up for some event in her Norfolk constituency without inviting her. Shepherd has asked Betty Boothroyd to look into the suggestions that George Turner, her neighbouring Labour MP, urged the event's organisers to leave her off the guest list.

JASPER GERARD



THE OCALAN TEST

The captured Kurdish terrorist must be given a fair trial

The dramatic midnight capture in Nairobi of Abdullah Ocalan, terrorist mastermind of the PKK Kurdish separatists, yesterday sparked off unprecedented Kurdish violence across Europe. With alarmingly co-ordination, Kurdish demonstrators stormed Greek embassies, seized hostages, fought pitched battles with police in some 20 cities and tried to set themselves alight. The violence and fanaticism inherent in the PKK philosophy could not have been more brutally demonstrated, nor could better warning have been given of the extremist actions. Mr Ocalan's supporters will attempt across Europe and the Middle East when he is put on trial.

The circumstances of his capture are still murky. But it is already clear that Greece is paying a heavy price for its involvement in this affair. Its embassies have been ransacked and diplomats kidnapped in the suspicion that the Greek Ambassador somehow betrayed his unwelcome guest in Nairobi to the Kenyan authorities, allowing Turkish special forces the chance to snatch one of the most wanted men in Europe.

The Greek Prime Minister and Government have come under withering attack at home, largely from those who foolishly believe that anyone opposed to the Turks must be worthy of support. And Mr Ocalan's lawyers have begun a contentious campaign accusing Greece, Italy, The Netherlands and virtually every other country that refused him asylum of betraying his human rights.

Several points need underlining before the world rushes to judgment. The first is that Mr Ocalan himself has no respect for human rights. He is no martyr to Kurdish aspirations for a homeland but a brutal Marxist terrorist, whose bloody 14-year campaign has claimed some 30,000 lives.

BLUE GENES

The Tories should beware of whipping up food scares

The Government has, for once, given the Opposition the ingredients for a good political row. The Conservatives spent much of yesterday blinding public disquiet about genetically modified (GM) food with a dash of sleaze, a teaspoon of ministerial incompetence and a splash of opportunism for good measure. William Hague clearly hopes that this Government will strew in this controversy, just as the last was sown by BSE. But if the Conservatives wish to be regarded as a responsible, mature party, they must be wary of overstepping the line between echoing the public's anxiety about this new science and scaremongering.

Naturally the public demands trustworthy, independent advice about GM food. The "bond of trust", to use one of the Prime Minister's favourite phrases, has not been bolstered by revelations that Lord Sainsbury of Turville, the supermarket billionaire turned Science Minister, once owned a company which controls the worldwide patent rights for a key gene used in the modification process. Emerging just days after allegations that research into GM food may have been suppressed by officials, this news led to predictable calls for Lord Sainsbury's resignation. But there is no reason why the minister should go.

Unlike the former Paymaster General, Geoffrey Robinson, Lord Sainsbury has made no secret of his financial affairs. By transferring his company holding into a blind trust three days after becoming a minister, he appears to have abided by the rules. The purpose of such trusts is to allow individuals to share their expertise and offer advice in the sheltered world of Westminster, free from any conflict of interest. Many might be bemused that, having distanced himself from his financial

interests, Lord Sainsbury should have to leave the room when his colleagues discuss GM foods, a specialist subject about which he knows more than virtually any other minister. Yet he is simply erring on the side of caution. Such timorousness is not a ground for resignation.

Most consumers will see the Conservative salvoes over the supermarket tycoon as a sideshow to the real debate over GM foods. The Conservatives are misguided in calling for a three-year moratorium on GM crops. Genetic engineering could offer untold advantages in the next century. Britain, home of Europe's largest biotechnology industry, stands to become a powerhouse in this new world. A moratorium would deter investment, blunt the country's competitive edge, and deprive consumers of the potential benefits.

The Tories would stand on stronger ground if they stuck to berating ministers for the muddle over food labelling. There is no agreement on the minimum content of GM material that must be declared. Many consumers are under the impression that "Frankenstein foods" have yet to escape from the laboratory, even though 60 per cent of processed foods contain genetically modified soya. Giving shoppers more information about what food contains is the surest way to allay their fears.

Genetic engineering is a complex issue which cannot be addressed by soundbite assurances or allegations. If Mr Hague confronts consumers' fears in an adult manner, reaffirming his belief that informed individuals should make their own decisions about what they eat, he will win plaudits. If not, he will find that food scares are creating a Frankenstein's monster which he cannot control.

HIGH SEAS AND HEROISM

A rescue is even more valiant than a race

A race pits man against man. It provides an honourable forum for human endeavour. But a rescue is even more valiant. Self-interest is sacrificed for the good of another. Yesterday, when Giovanni Soldini went to the aid of a stricken opponent in the Around Alone yacht race, he might have risked losing his place in one of the sailing world's most prestigious competitions, but he gained something even more valuable instead — the respect of fellow mariners. Naturally, the race organisers will now estimate how much time Soldini's rescue mission lost him and allow him to resume the competition, but when finally, in about two months' time, the winner is announced, it will not be the winning that the wider world will remember, but the singular act of heroism which took place along the way.

Ocean-racing offers one of the most challenging arenas for sporting heroism. Competitors match their skills against each other and against the elements. Yachts are tossed like salamander across winds and waves. Over the cold, vicious emptiness of the Southern Ocean, gales can blow more bitterly than anywhere on earth. No competitors enter the Around Alone unaware that they are flying in the face of the odds. When Isabelle Autissier's yacht capsized, she was stranded far out of range even of air rescue services. Soldini, may have benefited from the most up-to-date technology in coming to her aid, but he also preserved an ancient code of seafarers'

honour, placing himself in the tradition of such great mariners as Ernest Shackleton.

Modern yacht races maintain such noble traditions. In the previous Around Alone, the Briton Josh Hall was rescued by an Australian, Alan Nebauer, when his vessel sank after hitting a submerged container. Pete Goss was almost drowned in honour after he saved the Frenchman Raphael Dinelli during the Vendée Globe. But the powerful, lightweight Open 60 class boats which champion yachtsmen use these days appear increasingly unsuitable for heavy seas. Almost a quarter of the skippers who sail them into the Southern Ocean capsized. And these wide, flat vessels can prove hard to right again.

Yachtmen realise that they cannot continue to rely on the goodwill of rescue services. An expedition, such as that which saved Tim Baulcombe, can cost tens of thousands of pounds. In response, the safety of vessels is being improved. Swinging keels and cambered decks help a capsized boat to recover. In an earlier leg of the current Around Alone race, the four leading skippers, monitoring the approach of a storm, mutually agreed on an imaginary way point which would divert them safely north of the heavy weather. If this self-regulation could be tightened by a few more restrictions imposed by race organisers, the sea could prove a little less perilous, though the risk and challenge, and indeed the occasional heroism, will always remain.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Government fails to allay concerns over genetically modified foods

From Dr Erik Millstone and Professor Tim Lang

Sir, The Government has assured the public that the four GM (genetically modified) foods which have already entered the UK's food supply are entirely safe and that new GM foods will be permitted only if their safety is guaranteed. The value of that assurance is, however, undermined by the poverty of the evidence upon which it is based.

There is no general requirement that GM crops be subject to long-term feeding studies to check if they damage the health of laboratory animals. There is, similarly, no requirement to check their effects on the immune system. This was the sort of research which Dr Arpad Pusztai and his colleagues (reports and leading article, February 13) were conducting in Aberdeen.

The excuse for not requiring or conducting tests has been that those GM foods have been deemed "substantially equivalent" to the varieties already in our food supply. But this notion of substantial equivalence is tantamount to deciding not to require further tests.

Professor John Beringer, Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment, explained to the House of Lords Europe Committee (Lords Hansard, May 13, 1998, pp 2 and 3) that studies on the environmental impact of GM crops have been designed by the firms that conduct or sponsor them to ensure that no evidence of adverse impact is ever generated, and therefore almost nothing useful can be learned from a scrutiny of the resulting data. We agree.

However safe these crops might be, consumer choice should be paramount. Consumers have been promised that strict labelling rules will be introduced next month, but they may well ask why the introduction of GM foods was permitted before the labelling rules had been set.

If the new Food Standards Agency is to be more than a genetically engineered hybrid of the Ministry of Agriculture, rules will need to be changed to ensure that none of the expert advisers, on whom policy-makers rely, may act as a paid consultant to the companies whose products they evaluate.

We have been promised by the Government that all the scientific information available to the agency will be publicly accessible. Until that happens, it will be extremely hard to

remain credible. The Government must follow the advice of its scientists and ban Novartis GM maize was permitted before the labelling rules had been set.

Yours sincerely,
PAUL MAYER
Director, GeneWatch
The Courtyard,
Whitewell Road, Tideswell,
Buxton, Derbyshire SK17 8NY.

From Mr Seweryn Chomet

Sir, Unlike some other human activities, all science must be practised in public; indeed it must always be published.

Your leading article, "Genetic resist-

ance" (February 13), goes with micro-surgical precision to the heart of this matter by calling for the publication of all tests on genetically modified foods.

How else can consumers make up their mind about the safety of products offered to them by powerful corporations?

Yours faithfully,
SEWERYN CHOMET
(Visiting Research Fellow,
King's College London,
Strand Campus, WC2R 2LS.
February 14.

From Mrs Edwina Currie

Sir, The fuss about genetically engineered food is itself a little synthetic. There is nothing natural about an Aberdeen Angus bull, a Tamworth pig or a Cox's Pippin. Even the term "seedless fruit" is a contradiction in terms, yet we consume large quantities without a second thought.

The difference comes with the transfer of genes from one species to another. It must surely be wise to question why a potato might benefit from doctoring with a snowdrop gene, or whether it is sensible to scatter human genes about like so much

possible, into the foreseeable future, the gains outweigh the risks, and the risks are understood.

Yours sincerely,
EDWINA CURRIE
(Minister of Health, 1986-89),
The Tower House,
Findern, Derbyshire DE65 6AP.
February 15.

From Mr Nick Royle

Sir, The argument over genetic modification is made more important by the difficulty of determining which foods contain it, in spite of the Prime Minister's assurance (report, February 16).

As someone who would prefer not to eat such foods, I visited my local branch of Tesco's today, having called beforehand to find out the store's policy (not many GM foods, but items clearly marked). I filled my basket and then, aided by the manager, proceeded to remove three-quarters of the contents.

We then tried to replace the products with non-GM items. I ended up with virtually no packaged food. Ready-made puddings, including those purporting to be fresh, were excluded. I do feel it is time that all supermarkets clearly labelled such foods, possibly having separate non-GM sections.

As for the Prime Minister telling us that he eats GM food regularly, I seem to remember a government minister cramming a burger down his daughter's throat in similar circumstances.

Yours sincerely,
NICK ROYLE,
The Garden Flat,
98 Beaumont Street, SW3 6BU.
February 16.

From Mr Peter Whittle

Sir, Nature may not have done a perfect job in my case but I am an accommodating cove and have become used to what she created.

It is not that I am too old a dog — rather that I don't actually like the prospect of modification without the option. If the Government and supermarkets assure me that genetically modified food is safe, I instinctively want it clearly labelled so that I may avoid it.

Yours faithfully,
PETER WHITTLE,
Thrift Wood,
Pigeon House Lane, Freeland,
Witney, Oxfordshire OX8 8AG.
February 14.

Monitoring QCs

From Mr Alan Mackinnon

Sir, Appraisal of QCs, suggested by Mr Andrew Dismore, MP (letter, February 15), already comes in the simplest of forms. If they are beyond their prime, or insufficiently educated in their field of expertise, they will not get instructions. In reality a sitting MP in a safe seat seems far more secure in his or her position.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN MACKINNON,
71 Elsham Road, W14 8HD.
February 15.

From Mr Larry Rushton

Sir,

Mr Weigall really cannot blame the national electorate for the outcome of the February 1974 "miners" election.

Overall, Heath's Tories actually won nearly a quarter of a million votes more than the Labour Party. The vagaries of our medieval constituency system allowed Harold Wilson to wriggle into power by the thickness of a cigarette paper.

Yours sincerely,

LARRY RUSHTON,

10 Smith Close, Piddington,

Northampton NN7 2DW.

February 11.

The English identity

From Dr Derek W. Arthur

Sir, The extensively travelled Scot, David Wilson (letter, February 13), has failed to encounter "a modest English person". I am a Scot who has no need to travel to meet one: I am married to one.

Indeed, she is too modest to claim to match Mr Wilson's qualities — "friendly, easygoing, genuine and caring" — though well-qualified to do so. Yours faithfully,
D. W. ARTHUR,
25 Waulkill Drive,
Penicuik, Midlothian EH26 8LA.
derek@maths.ed.ac.uk

From Mr Laurence Boyd

Sir, I agree with Miss Alice Goddard's views on national identity (letter, February 9).

Boasting about modesty is typical of the English.

Yours faithfully,

LAURENCE BOYD,

96 Alderman Road,

Glasgow G13 3BW.

February 11.

Knot rated

From Mr Jack Norfolk

Sir, My father always said: "Never trust a man who wears a bow-tie, unless he is a gynaecologist" (letters, February 5 and 12).

Yours faithfully,
JACK NORFOLK,
2 The Street, Little Waldingfield,
Nr Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 0SQ.
February 13.

Women in uniform

From Major Jeremy Monson

Sir, Your photograph today of the two new female musicians in the band of the Welsh Guards amply illustrates the absurdity of dressing women in uniforms designed for men. In the days when the Queen attended her Birthday Parade on horseback, she was clever enough not to make that mistake. She wore a specially modified version of a Footguards Colonel's full dress uniform and looked superb in it.

The MoD should learn from Her Majesty's example.

Yours faithfully,
JEREMY MONSON
(Grenadier Guards, 1952-67),
Keepers Cottage, Scarlets Wood,
Hare Hatch, nr Reading RG10 9TL.
February 11.

From Mr Christopher Y. Nutt

Sir, As a lawyer of some thirty years' standing, I can assure your correspondents (letters, February 8) that the relics of Saint Valentine are not in Dublin, Glasgow or Edgbaston.

No Sir, they are scattered all over the divorce courts of southern England.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER Y. NUTT,
Bancroft Park, Abingdon,
Cambridge CB1 6BQ.
February 15.

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

05/12/98 HAP



COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
February 16: The Queen held an audience at Buckingham Palace this morning.

The Right Hon Tony Blair, MP (Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury) had an audience of the Queen this evening.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
February 16: The Duke of Edinburgh, President of the City and Guilds of London Institute this morning received Dr Nicholas Carey, Mr Paul Wates and Mr David Young at Buckingham Palace.

His Royal Highness, Life Member, today attended a lunch at the new Naval and Military Club, 4 St James's Square, London W1.

The Duke of Edinburgh, Chancellor, this evening attended a reception to celebrate The University of Cambridge's partnership with industry and business at St James's Palace.

CLARENCE HOUSE
February 16: Lieutenant-Colonel Simon Mayall today had the honour of being received by Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, Colonel-in-Chief, 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards, upon relinquishing his appointment as Commandant Officer.

Lieutenant-Colonel Patrick Andrews also had the honour of being received by Her Majesty upon assuming his appointment as Commanding Officer, 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards.

ST JAMES'S PALACE
February 16: The Prince of Wales this morning visited the Britannia

Royal Naval College, Dartmouth.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
February 16: The Princess Royal, Chancellor, University of London, this morning visited the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, Camden, London WC1.

Her Royal Highness, Chancellor, University of London, this afternoon visited the Institute of Commonwealth Studies in its 50th Anniversary Year, at 28 Russell Square, Camden, London WC1.

The Princess Royal later presented The Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers' The Princess Royal Award 1998 at Buckingham Palace.

KENSINGTON PALACE
February 16: The Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon, President, The Guide Association, held a reception at Kensington Palace this afternoon following the presentation of Brooches to those who have become Queen's Guides.

ST JAMES'S PALACE
February 16: The Duke of Kent, Trustee, the National Museum of Science and Industry, this evening attended a reception at Spencer House, London SW1.

THATCHED HOUSE LODGE
RICHMOND PARK
February 16: Princess Alexandra, President of the Children's Country Holidays Fund, this afternoon attended the presentation to the charity of the 'Investors in People Award' at FOCUS, Central London Training and Enterprise Council, Centre Point, New Oxford Street, London.

Its gold medal display includes one of the tallest snowdrops, *Galanthus plicatum* 'Warham' with very large flowers on eight to nine inch stems. The flowers of some snowdrops are heavily marked with green, including 'Merlin' and 'Jacquinetta'. Also very distinctive is 'Tym', which has a green blotch on each petal. 'Blond Inge' is marked with yellow spots.

Dwarf spring bulbs are featuring strongly at this show, which opened in Westminster yesterday, which opened in Bideford Gardens, of Bideford, Somerset, has created a woodland garden with a Devon bank planted with a range of snowdrops, daffodils and other small bulbs. Another part of this gold medal exhibit shows the more formal use of dwarf bulbs. *Iris*

histrioides "Angel's Eye", a new hybrid with clear blue flowers, is being shown for the first time.

The gold medal display of dwarf bulbs from Potterton and Martin of Nettleton, Lincolnshire, includes a daffodil named by the nursery, Bob Potterton bought some bulbs of *Narcissus romieuxii* collected from the Atlas Mountains in Morocco in 1968, grew them on, selected them for exhibition and named one of them 'Treble Chance'. It has large flared pale-cream flowers.

Another highlight of the show is a gold medal display of Hepaticas from Ashwood Nurseries of Kingswinford, West Midlands. These are hardy dwarf spring flowering woodland perennials with bowl-shaped or starry flowers suited to shady parts of the garden. The nurseries are showing species, varieties and hybrids from Europe, Asia, Japan and America. They are launching a new hybrid at the show - *Hepatica media* 'Harrington Beauty', with pale to mid-blue semi-double flowers. It originated in a garden in the Vale of Evesham, Worcestershire. The American species *H. americana* is very distinctive with purple flushed foliage and tiny single pale-blue or white flowers.

In the British Iris Society's early spring show, which features the bulbous reticulata irises, Beatrix Baughen of Downe, Kent, has scooped the major prizes: the Mini Peckham Cup for three pots, and the Patricia Linnegar Memorial Trophy for a container planted for effect.

Gold medals have been awarded to the following artists: Marta Cittino-Argentino of Madrid (ink drawings of aquatic plants from Castile, La Mancha, Spain) and Deborah Lambkin of Dublin (watercolour and gouache paintings of Nervi).

The show, in the New Horticultural Hall, Greycoat Street, Westminster, is open today from 10am to 5pm.

Snowdrops sparkle into gold

By ALAN TOOGOOD
HORTICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

TO THE CASUAL OBSERVER all snowdrops may look alike, but closer inspection reveals that they vary greatly in size, shape and flower markings.

Frogrove Plants, of Newbury, is providing an opportunity to study at close quarters a wide range of snowdrops at the Royal Horticultural Society's Flower Show.

Its gold medal exhibit includes one of the tallest snowdrops, *Galanthus plicatum* 'Warham' with very large flowers on eight to nine inch stems. The flowers of some snowdrops are heavily marked with green, including 'Merlin' and 'Jacquinetta'. Also very distinctive is 'Tym', which has a green blotch on each petal. 'Blond Inge' is marked with yellow spots.

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Today's royal engagements

The Prince of Wales will undertake engagements in Brighton, East Sussex.

Prince Edward, Trustee, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, will attend the award's friends' reception at Buckingham Palace at 6.00, followed by the award's annual Charter Member dinner at St James's Palace at 7.45.

The Princess Royal will visit Bakewell, Derbyshire, to view various aspects of the Bakewell Project - a scheme to secure the future of Bakewell through economic, social, business, support and training needs of the community - at 10.00; will visit Royal Crown Derby, Osmaston Road, Derby, at 11.30; as Patron, National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, will attend Derby bureau's 60th anniversary celebration and open its new premises at Progressive Building, Sutwell Street, Derby, at 12.00; will open the new factory extension at Thornsons, Thorntown Park, Somercotes, Alfreton, at 1.30; and will visit Green Gables, Cheshire Home, Wingfield Road, Alfreton, at 3.10.

D.H. Cockburn, MC

A celebration of the life of Dr H.D. Cockburn (Cock), former Medical Superintendent, St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, London, will be held at St James's Church, Sussex Gardens, W2 on Friday, March 19, at 2.30pm.

Mr Nigel Kent-Lemon
A service to celebrate the life of Nigel Kent-Lemon will be held on Friday, March 26, 1999, at noon at Holy Trinity Brompton, Knightsbridge, All family and friends and colleagues are welcome. A reception will follow.

Lois Schaffer

A memorial meeting in memory of Lois Schaffer, barrister, former civil servant, 66; Mr Alan Bates, actor, 65; Dr Gordon Cook, former President, Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, 67; the Earl of Dundonald, 38; the Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, KT, 75; Lord Root, 90; Mr Bernie Grant, MP, 55; Lord Hoyle, 69; Mr Barry Humphries, entertainer and author, 66; Sir Gordon Jones, former chairman, Yorkshire Water, 72; Mr R.P. Kennedy, Head Master, Highgate School, 50; Miss Julie McEneaney, actress and singer, 58; General Sir John Mogg, 86; Mr Norman Pace, comedian, 46; Dr Claire Palley, former Principal, St Anne's College, Oxford, 68; Baroness Rendell of Babergh, 69; Miss Patricia Routledge, actress, 70; Lord Lynn of Hadley, 69; Commandant Mary Talbot, former director, WRNS, 77; Mr Benjamin Whitrow, actor, 62; Sir Anthony Wilson, former accountancy adviser to HM Treasury, 71.

Appointments in the Forces

RAF

Air Vice-Marshal D C Couzens to be Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Logistics) from February 19 in succession to Major-General G Ewer.

Air Commodore D R Williams, SHAFPA, 52.99.

Group Captain M D Stringer, TGD, 52.99; J O MacEachern, 52.99.

Wing Commander N E Wharmby, 52.99; C Mace, 52.99; D R Elliott, 52.99; R J Elliott, 52.99; C P W Gray, 52.99; N M Connell, 52.99; M C Green, 52.99; N M Connell, 52.99; D A Plans, 52.99; C M Squish, Alreton, 1.299; C M Squish, Alreton, 1.299; M L Page, RAFO Benson, 15.29; S A Waygood, MOD, 15.29.

Hill House

Former pupils and staff of Hill House, 17 Hanover Place, London SW1, will be invited to a reception on April 23 to mark the 50th anniversary of the school's foundation and the 50th birthday of Colonel Townsend. Please write to the school with your current address and dates at Hill House for full details and an invitation.

Ambassador

Mr Glynn Davies has been appointed Ambassador to Panama from March in succession to Mr Bill Sinton who will be transferring to a new Diplomatic Service appointment.

Chapel of Scotland

The Rev Dr David Sinclair, Minister of Martyrs' Church, St Andrews, to be the first full-time secretary of the Church and Nation Committee from March 22.

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OBITUARIES

JOHN EHRLICHMAN

John Ehrlichman, White House aide to President Richard Nixon, died on Monday 15 aged 73. He was born on March 20, 1925.

John Ehrlichman and H.R. Haldeman, President Nixon's chief courtier and grim keepers of the poisons of the White House, were hated for their arrogance well before they took the leading roles in the Watergate scandal. Both paid for their involvement by terms in jail.

Ehrlichman was involved in Watergate right from the start. He was put in overall charge of the White House special investigations "dirty tricks" unit - the so-called "plumbers" - who organised the break-in at the Democratic National Committee at the Senate in Washington on June 7, 1972. The intention was to replace a telephone bugging device installed in a previous break-in, which was not working. The intruders, however, were caught by a security guard.

As Nixon's chief domestic policy adviser, Ehrlichman, along with the White House Chief of Staff, Haldeman, greatly contributed to the paranoia at the White House and to Nixon's isolation from reality.

Despite the landslide re-election victory that Nixon won in 1972, the White House still felt beleaguered and was fully prepared to engage in criminal activities to foil its enemies, who included most critics of the conduct of the Vietnam War. Watergate was the tip of the iceberg of these activities, and Nixon had little time to celebrate his election victory before the scandal broke.

After the Watergate break-in was brushed aside as "a



Ehrlichman testifying to the Senate Watergate Committee in 1973

third-rate burglary" by Nixon's press spokesman. But the scandal soon raced out of hand when Nixon desperately began a cover-up to save the necks of his "President's men".

His efforts began to collapse when the baby-faced John Dean, the White House counsel, began to suspect that Ehrlichman and Haldeman were setting him up as the fall guy to take the blame for the cover-up. When it was learned that Dean was secretly plea-bargaining with investigators for a reduced prison sentence, Ehrlichman became the overseer of the cover-up, notorious for his "almost

take the blame" - and to leave him "twisting slowly, slowly in the wind".

Burke's testimony blew the scandal wide open, and Nixon realised that he would have to sacrifice his aides if he was to survive. In late April 1973 he called Ehrlichman and Haldeman to his mountain retreat at Camp David to ask for their resignations, knowing that they would be convicted for Watergate crimes.

In Ehrlichman's account of his meeting with the President, Nixon sobbed uncontrollably and said his dismissals of the pair was "like cutting off my arms". Nixon said that the night before he "almost

prayed he would not wake up". Ehrlichman said he put his arms around the President and said: "Don't think that way." Nevertheless, he said he told Nixon that he regretted the President's decision, adding: "I still feel I have done nothing without your implied or direct approval." He added that he asked only that Nixon would "explain all this to my kids".

In July 1974 Ehrlichman was convicted on charges of obstructing justice, conspiracy and perjury. He served 18 months in prison before being released on parole. Nixon had once promised Ehrlichman and Haldeman that they

would never go to jail. But on the eve of his resignation in August 1974 they appealed to the President to grant them a pardon before he resigned. Nixon rejected that plea.

John Daniel Ehrlichman was born in Tacoma, Washington. He graduated from the University of California at Los Angeles in 1948, after wartime service as a navigator in the US Air Force. In 1951 he took a law degree at Stanford. He then embarked on his career with a Seattle law firm.

At 43 he thought he was living the American dream when he became the top presidential adviser at Nixon's personal invitation. But after his trial he was to say: "I felt that every bit of pride, integrity, the winning I had strived for all my professional life had been stripped from me."

In an interview some years after his release he acknowledged that he had been "proud and vain", but said that he had come out of the ordeal with "a curious sense of freedom".

In later years he acknowledged his guilt but wanted the chapter closed. After his release he moved first to Santa Fe, New Mexico, and then to Atlanta. He became a radio commentator, and drew on his inside knowledge of politics in a number of novels. He also wrote a memoir, *Witness to Power: The Nixon Years* (1983).

Having been a fit 3m, 15-stone figure of fear in the White House - referred to by his enemies as Nixon's Nazi guard - Ehrlichman transformed himself after his release from prison into a relaxed, easygoing and friendly man with a fatherly beard.

His first and second marriages ended in divorce. He is survived by his third wife Karen Hilliard, and by four sons and two daughters.

LIEUTENANT-COMMANDER HORACE TAYLOR

Lieutenant-Commander Horace Taylor, GC, MBE, wartime bomb disposal officer, died on January 17 aged 90. He was born on October 23, 1908.

HORACE TAYLOR had the unusual distinction of being recommended for the George Cross by the Air Ministry - although he was serving as a sub-lieutenant in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve at the time. He had successfully defused a German parachute mine close to RAF Uxbridge in September 1940. It was only his second bomb-disposal job but he extricated the fuses without fuss.

The Luftwaffe late-summer daylight bombing offensive against London had failed, with severe losses of aircraft. But from September 9 the bombers of Luftflotte 3, based in northern France, attacked London for 57 nights without pause. More than 90 per cent of the bombs exploded on impact, bringing death and destruction, especially to the dense housing areas of the East End. The remainder did not explode and this residual sinister threat led to the demand for skilled bomb-disposal squads with steady nerves and hands.

Horace Taylor came to this exciting work from an unlikely background, yet he was both intellectually and temperamentally well-suited to it. Turned down for seagoing operations when he volunteered for the Royal Navy because of his eyesight, he wrote to the Admiralty and explained the expertise he had to offer. His first and second marriages ended in divorce. He is survived by his third wife Karen Hilliard, and by four sons and two daughters.

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Although defusing the bomb at Uxbridge was cited for his award of the George Cross, his first job had been infinitely more dramatic. A parachute-delivered landmine had landed across the gateway of a North London hospital holding 2,000 casualties, many of whom had been evacuated with the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk. Taylor identified the mine and knew that it had a fuse that would detonate 17 seconds after being triggered. His team dug a small "funk hole" in the ground at just the distance from the mine which

port team disarmed in and around London in late 1940. The citation for his George Cross covered the period from September 26 to October 17 and he would have completed several bomb disposals each day.

As the Blitz continued Taylor and his small team were deployed to the south coast ports, which the Luftwaffe found easier targets than London and inland cities.

Once, while working on a landmine in the attic of a tenement block, he suddenly realised that the defusing procedure had gone wrong. He had just time to leave the attic when the bomb exploded. It blew him clean out of the house and across into the next street, minus all his clothes and blinded by dust. His fascination with analysis remained paramount, however. He insisted on telephoning his supervising officer to explain what had gone wrong - for the safety of his and other bomb-disposal teams - before he would accept a lift to hospital.

When the Blitz ended, thanks to the Luftwaffe being concentrated against Russia, Taylor turned to the mine-clearing duty for which he had been trained. Subsequently he became one of the founder members of the Royal Naval Clearance Divers.

William Horace Taylor was educated at Manchester Grammar School and at one period worked on the administrative staff of Manchester Central Docks. After the war he became a travelling commissioner for the Sea Scouts and later, from 1952 to 1974, he was a Field Commissioner for the South West of England Scout Association.

He was appointed MBE for services to the Scout movement in 1973.

He married, in 1946, Joan Isabel Skaffe d'Ingerthorpe. She predeceased him. He is survived by their son and three daughters.

SIR JAMES HILL



Sir James Hill, former Conservative MP for Southampton Test, died yesterday aged 72. He was born on December 21, 1926.

ADBUST backbench constituency MP James Hill lived at work in, and was thoroughly identified with, the area he represented in Parliament. Though he never held government office or wielded any particular influence, he made sure both in the House and in the letters columns of newspapers that the affairs of Southampton always seemed to be part of the political and social agenda.

He was lucky in that the city's woes often appeared to be a paradigm of the problems of urban southern England. His campaigns against drunkenness in pubs, vandalism, prostitution and the iniquities of the Dock Labour Scheme found an echo in many a middle-class bosom in places far from the port town.

But although he was right-wing, Hill's conservatism was of a commonsense rather than doctrinal sort, and he was no

little Englander. A prosperous pig-breeder, in his earlier days he had nevertheless been a cautious Europhile, hoping to wield some influence as the first British chairman of a major EEC committee. He was a strong supporter of the Channel Tunnel, at one time urging the use of European Bank funds to expedite its construction. And he consistently opposed the privatisation of the Ordnance Survey.

His first tenure of the Southampton Test seat lasted little longer than the life of the Edward Heath administration of 1970-74. He was defeated at the October 1974 election, at which Harold Wilson sought to improve on the parliamentary advantage he had achieved over Heath in the 1970 election. After the war, he studied electronics at Southampton University and joined BOAC, training as a pilot and navigator. His BOAC career took him all over the world and at one stage he was seconded to the United Nations flying staff in Kathmandu.

After leaving BOAC, in the 1960s he became a director in a Southampton firm of estate agents and property develop-

ers. He also became a partner of Gunshot Herd Pedigree Piggery. From 1966 he served on Southampton City Council and in 1968 was adopted as prospective candidate for the Southampton Test parliamentary seat. In the election of 1970, which saw the defeat of Harold Wilson's Government by Edward Heath, he took the seat from the Labour MP, Robert Mitchell, by 1,802 votes.

In Parliament he was soon airing local issues such as Southampton's planning blight and the abuse of improvement grants by property developers, and was secretary of the Conservative back-bench committee on housing and construction, 1971-73. He also spoke on European air transport and after being appointed a delegate to the European Parliament in 1973 he was given the chairmanship of its Regional Policy and Transport Committee. But he was out of the Commons by October 1974, narrowly beaten by Bryan Gould, having survived the Labour challenge of February that year.

He had to content himself with the arena of local politics for the next five years until the return to government of the Conservatives under Margaret Thatcher made this seat, always an indicator of overall electoral fortunes, a Tory prize once again.

For the next 18 years he was one of those hardworking backbenchers who serve on select committees, in his case European Legislation (1979-84), Transport (1993-97) and Procedure (1992-97). Although his role as a backbencher was largely to vent opinion, his one notable parliamentary success was to steer through a private Bill which gave pub landlords the power to ban violent thugs from pubs for periods of up to two years. It became law in 1990.

By now he had become thoroughly disillusioned with the European Community, castigating its Parliament and the Common Agricultural Policy. But he continued to take an interest in the Council of Europe, sitting on its Political and Legal Affairs Committee for separate periods in the 1980s and 1990s, and serving as a government whip from 1980 to 1989.

Hill had held his seat with comfortable margins of several thousand in the general elections of 1983 and 1987, but in 1992 the writing was on the wall with the stock of the Conservative Government falling rapidly. He held the seat that year but with his majority down to a perilous few hundred votes. In the general election of 1997 he was swept out of Parliament by a massive 13,684 votes. He had been knighted the previous year.

Thereafter he devoted all his time to his property interests and to breeding pedigree Large White pigs. Hill was a genial, convivial man who lived good company, dining and gardening.

He is survived by his wife Ruby, and by two sons and three daughters.

JOYCE COOMBS



Joyce Coombs, Anglican author and broadcaster, and former London Diocesan President of the Mothers' Union, died on January 17 aged 93. She was born on March 9, 1905.

JOYCE COOMBS was a devout Anglican in the High Church tradition. She made her name in the London diocese as a champion of the parochial system and of the city's Anglo-Catholic churches. In a wider sphere, she was an author who celebrated Anglo-Catholic church life in broadcasts, journalism and a number of highly readable books. She also had a distinguished career in voluntary social welfare work and as a pillar of the Mothers' Union.

She was the London Diocesan President of the Mothers' Union from 1946 to 1955 and for a short period was Central President. She served on Church Assembly and the General Synod from 1945 to 1985. In 1954, when a London diocesan lay delegate to the World Council of Churches at Evanston in the United States, about which she voiced her criticisms on her return, much to the annoyance of the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Geoffrey Fisher.

Joyce Coombs was educated at Wolverhampton High School and Westfield College, London, where she read classics. Her family was poor, and illness and lack of money forced her to leave college at the end of her second year. For the year before her marriage in 1926 she worked at the Dockland Mayflower settlement, where the hopeless poverty prevailing in the East End horrified her. Later she became vice-chairwoman of Finchley and Friern Barnet Council of Social Service and a member of the British Committee of Family Organisations of the Central Council for Women's Church Work, and of the Church of England Moral Welfare Council.

Her task as President of the London Diocesan Mothers' Union was to revive its postwar life. Under her presidency, the membership rose from 10,000 to 15,000. The most remarkable feature of her presidency was her tremendous energy: she often spoke at four or five meetings a week, her inspiring speeches earning her a reputation as a fearless and outstanding speaker.

Her husband died in 1977. Then, early in the 1980s, her sight began to fail. For one of her last speeches to the London Diocesan Synod - on parish life and the work of the clergy - she had to be led to the microphone. She then spoke in support of the work of the parishes, where she believed the real work of the Church was carried out.

A move to Bournemouth in 1987 enabled her to be near two of her sons and their families. She bore her increasing blindness with great fortitude.

In her last years, she wrote

movingly for *Thoughts for the Day* about the effects of her blindness and about facing death. Her faith in God and her belief in the Catholicity of the Church of England never wavered. Her second son, Michael, died in June 1998 but she is survived by her other two sons, Roy and Martin, who is a priest.

PERSONAL COLUMN

IN MEMORIAM - PRIVATE

FIELDHOUSE - John Darling, love you now and always, the days are long until we meet again. Midge.

TICKETS FOR SALE

ALL ANNUAL SWIMMING MEM. ARE FOR SALE. £10.00. Tel. 0171 5264 0762.

CHAPTER IN LONDON - FREDERIC CHAPMAN, 1914-1989. Tel. 0171 5264 0762.

FIVE NATIONS CHAMPIONSHIP - Ross V. Scott, Roger Whitehead, Alan W. Lewis, Michael W. Lewis, Michael D. Lewis and Alan G. Lewis.

HOLLYFIELD - Thomas, available. Tel. 0171 5264 0762.

SWIMMING - Tel. 0171 5264

THE TIMES TODAY

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 17 1999

NEWS

Girl sets fire to herself

■ A 15-year-old schoolgirl set herself alight as hundreds of Kurdish protesters took to the streets in support of a group of compatriots who were occupying the Greek embassy in London. As Negla Kanteper was lifted into an ambulance she gave a victory sign and chanted "long live Kurdistan." Her life was saved by another demonstrator and police officers who chased her down the road and used their tunics to smother flames which were shooting from her clothes. Pages 1, II

Sainsbury backs out of food meetings

■ Lord Sainsbury, the Science Minister, was accused of being a "lame duck" after announcing that he would leave government meetings whenever genetically modified food policy was raised. Conservatives claimed it was "ridiculous" that he had to absent himself from scientific discussions. Pages 1, 4

Yacht rescue

The French solo yachtswoman Isabelle Autissier was rescued by a fellow competitor in the single-handed round-the-world race, after her boat capsized in the Southern Ocean. Page 1

Racehorses killed

Three racehorses were killed at Sedgefield after they collided with a loose horse running in the opposite direction. Page 1

Brit awards

Robbie Williams emerged as a symbol of triumph over adversity last night after overcoming drink and drug addiction to win three coveted Brit awards. Page 1

Executive approved

The Northern Ireland assembly set the scene for a showdown between Unionism and republicanism by approving the structure of the new executive. Page 2

War crimes trial

The judge, counsel and jury of Britain's Central Criminal Court were led to a site in the middle of a Belarus wood where 3,000 Jews were stripped naked and machine-gunned. Page 3

Killer son

The son of a former Tory mayor was convicted of murdering his mother in an "explosion of emotional violence" that was likened to a Greek tragedy. Page 5

Race murder

A Texas sheriff told a court how he found a cigarette lighter with a KKK emblem at the scene of the murder of a black man. Page 14

■ Given the choice between the palm-fringed beaches of the Bahamas and a wet winter in the West Country, most people would not think twice. But 19 technicians with Westland helicopters have turned down the chance to exchange the grey skies of Yeovil in Somerset for three months on an island described as a tropical paradise. Page 7

Winter beats the beaches

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The rebuilt balconies of the Royal Opera House after the Culture Secretary Chris Smith had laid the last brick of the building's new shell

BUSINESS

Approach rejected: Barclays has rejected an approach from Royal Bank of Scotland, made in the last few weeks, which would have led to a £35 billion merger. Page 23

Budget surplus: Britain racked up a record surplus on the public finances in January, confirming that the Treasury is heading for a large budget surplus this year. Page 23

Banks raided: Eight banks in France, Germany, Italy and Spain were raided by European Commission officials as part of an investigation into charge-fixing since the launch of the euro. Page 23

Markets: The FTSE 100 rose 98.10 to 4,621.3, the pound rose 0.57 cents to \$1.6334 and 0.57p against the euro to 68.45p. The sterling index rose to 101.4 from 100.5. Page 42

Boxing: Naseem Hamed, who defends his WBO featherweight title against Paul Ingle in April, has announced a new six-hour deal thought to be worth more than \$120 million. Page 41

Sailing: After the rescue of Isabelle Autissier, France's leading yachtswoman, from the Southern Ocean, is the Around Alone Race really worth the risk? Page 42

SPORT

Football: Arsenal travel to face Manchester United in an FA Carling Premiership fixture that recent history has shown to play a significant role in deciding the destiny of the championship. Page 40

Rugby union: England have included Jonny Wilkinson, the 19-year-old Newcastle Falcons centre, in the team to play Scotland. Page 44

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ARTS

Thumbs down: Welsh National Opera's new production of Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes*, staged by the German director Peter Stein, misses the target, says Rodney Milnes. Page 35

Loud and clear: Purists may cry "foul", but like it or not *Tosca* is going electric when microphones and loudspeakers arrive at the Albert Hall this week. Page 35

Happy snapper: The Barbican Art Gallery explores Picasso's fascination with the camera and how it influenced his art. Page 36

Record breaker: Rob Becker made history in 1996 when his *Defending the Caveman* became the longest-running solo play in the history of Broadway. Now he is bringing it to London. Page 37

Boxing: Naseem Hamed, who defends his WBO featherweight title against Paul Ingle in April, has announced a new six-hour deal thought to be worth more than \$120 million. Page 41

Sailing: After the rescue of Isabelle Autissier, France's leading yachtswoman, from the Southern Ocean, is the Around Alone Race really worth the risk? Page 42

CULTURE

Selout: The urge to kiss and sell when a marriage fails is lamentable, says Celia Johnson. Page 15

Still beating: Dr Michael DeBakey is 90 years old but his hands are steady enough for him to continue his work as a pioneering heart surgeon. Page 16

Selling on: Nigel Hawkes reports how the unsinkable Noah's Ark story continues to inspire scientific expeditions. Page 16

Just say no: Introducing a new series, Asha Phillips, a child psychotherapist trained at the Tavistock Clinic, explains how to say no to your child — whether a baby, a toddler, a primary school pupil or a teenager. Page 17

Boxing: Naseem Hamed, who defends his WBO featherweight title against Paul Ingle in April, has announced a new six-hour deal thought to be worth more than \$120 million. Page 41

Sailing: After the rescue of Isabelle Autissier, France's leading yachtswoman, from the Southern Ocean, is the Around Alone Race really worth the risk? Page 42

WEDNESDAY

Preview: The Countryside Alliance feud: *Blood on the Carpet* (BBC2, 9.30pm). Review: Why modern art is no longer a joke. Page 44

OPINION

Midnight express

Turkey's peace at home and credibility abroad depend on decent treatment of Abdullah Ocalan. The Turkish Government's one is to prove its charges. If it does, the stiffer moral challenge will be to show magnanimity. Page 19

Blue genes

If the Conservatives wish to be regarded as a responsible party they must be wary of overstepping the line between public anxiety about genetically modified foods and scaremongering. Page 19

High seas

In going to the aid of a strike opponent in the Around Alone race, Soldini placed himself in the illustrious tradition of the greatest mariners. Page 19

CINEMA

SIMON JENKINS

For all the necessary reprimands about to be visited on Sir Paul Condón and his force, I find something sickening in well-paid, comfortable, self-regulating professions coexisting as "prejudiced" those who do far madder jobs. Page 8

MICHAEL GOVE

Mr Hague is a skilled Commons performer but his style is Classical Not Romantic. Page 8

ALAN COREN

I should have been there for when Dolly the sheep materialised, because you suddenly found yourself scared over how long it might be before there was a *Shane Warbowling* from both ends. Page 8

PETER RIDDELL

No Chancellor is ever really candid about taxes. Page 8

JOHN EHRHICHHMAN

John Ehrlichman, Nixon aide; Lee tenant-Commander Horace Taylor, bomb disposal; Sir James Hill, Conservative MP; Joyce Coopers, Mothers' Union. Page 22

GM FOOD

GM food; Arsenal and fair play; Labour and Third Reich; QC's English identity. Page 1

BESTSELLER

Worrying development: The £1 billion proposal for a hotel, offices, shops and public spaces near Tower Bridge sounds like good news for the area. So why are local residents worried? Page 32

SCOTTISH

The US Postal Service took the cigarette out of Jackson Pollock's mouth for his portrait of a new 33 cent stamp. While a spokesman insists this was a "design decision" that had nothing to do with the Government's anti-smoking campaign, the change is unsettling because it tells a lie, albeit a small one, about this master of abstract expressionism. Page 1

GM FOOD

John Ehrlichman, Nixon aide; Lee tenant-Commander Horace Taylor, bomb disposal; Sir James Hill, Conservative MP; Joyce Coopers, Mothers' Union. Page 22

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GM food; Arsenal and fair play; Labour and Third Reich; QC's English identity. Page 1

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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 17 1999

Treasury on target for record budget surplus

By JANET BUSH
ECONOMICS EDITOR

BRITAIN racked up a record surplus on the public finances in January, confirming that the Treasury is heading for a large budget surplus this year.

Treasury officials were at pains to play down the figures, clearly hoping to dampen down hopes of a Budget bonanza next month. However, City economists yesterday pre-

dicted that the Treasury could achieve a budget surplus for the tax year to the end of March of as much as £10 billion compared with the same stage last year.

The Office for National Statistics reported yesterday that Britain recorded a public sector net cash surplus of £12.4 billion in January. With only two months of the tax year to go, the Treasury has built up a surplus of £13.7 billion, an im-

provement of £10 billion compared with the same stage last year.

The strength of January's public finance performance was partly a result of surging income tax receipts because of self-assessment but more to do with very low growth in public spending. Cumulative departmental spending so far this year is only 2.1 per cent higher than last year against a Treasury forecast of growth of nearly 5 per cent.

Jonathan Loynes, economist at

HSBC, said: "Such a favourable starting position means that the Chancellor could conceivably spend several billion pounds in the March Budget and yet still forecast that he will meet his fiscal rules with plenty of room to spare."

The City speculated that, despite the economic slowdown, which will inevitably mean that the public finances deteriorate from their healthy position, the Chancellor has enough money to deliver his

promise of a 10p starting rate of income tax.

The ONS also published inflation figures for January that showed underlying inflation, excluding mortgage interest payments, had remained at 2.6 per cent, just above the Government's target of 2.5 per cent.

Headline inflation fell to 2.4 per cent in January from 2.5 per cent in December, reflecting cuts in mortgage rates. Consumer prices, using the standard European measure,

nudged up to 1.6 per cent from 1.5 per cent in December.

The City had expected underlying inflation to fall back to target in January given evidence of aggressive discounting in the new year sales. Treasury officials noted that the data had been collected a week later than last year, by which time many sales had already finished. Another reason keeping the index up was a rise in the price of potatoes which had sent up frozen chip prices.

RBS merger plan rejected by Barclays

By CAROLINE MERRELL AND JASON NISSE

BARCLAYS has rejected an approach from Royal Bank of Scotland which would have led to a £35 billion merger between the two banks.

A meeting to discuss the merger was scheduled for last week but was called off at the last moment ahead of the announcement that Barclays had secured Bank of America's Mike O'Neill as its new chief executive.

The approach to Barclays was made both by phone call and letter from Sir George Mathewson, Royal Bank's chief executive, after the resignation of Martin Taylor. In the merger, the proposed board structure would have had Sir George as chief executive of the merged bank with Sir Peter Middleton, Barclays' deputy chairman, as chairman. Fred Goodwin, from Royal Bank, would have been finance director. Iain Robertson of Royal Bank in charge of retail operations and Chris Lendrum of Barclays in charge of the corporate side.

JP Morgan, which is under-

stood to have advised on the possible merger, calculated that billions of pounds of cost savings could be brought by merging the two bank networks.

Royal Bank refused to comment yesterday. Sir Peter, however, said: "We have nothing on the stocks at the moment but obviously if something came up that was consistent with our strategy we would have to look at it. We are not letting it mesmerise us."

Sir Peter was speaking as Barclays announced a fall in profits last year and plans to embark on an extensive cost-cutting programme over the next three years. He refused to let the savings the bank was hoping to achieve through analysts said that cuts would be sure to include job losses.

Operating profits fell 20 per cent despite huge losses in Russia, and year 2000 costs. Overall costs rose by 5 per cent last year. Operating profits were £1.99 billion compared with £2.48 billion in 1997, while pre-tax profit rose

slightly from £1.7 billion to £1.9 billion.

Sir Peter said that full details of the cost reduction would be revealed in six months. He claimed that the bank had been successful in reducing costs at Barclaycard by 15 per cent.

Barclays Capital, the bank's investment arm, sustained the brunt of the losses in Russia, showing an operating loss of £265 million last year (£252 million profit).

On the stock market Barclays shares rose more than 6 per cent to £16.42. Analysts said the reaction probably reflected relief that no new bad news had emerged. Shares at Barclays have now risen 25 per cent since the appointment of Mr O'Neill was announced.

The highlight of Barclays' profits statement was its retail banking division which showed a strong increase in operating profits of 18 per cent to £1.51 billion from £1.28 billion the previous year.

Profits at the corporate banking division also rose by 6 per cent to £972 million from £921 million.

Analysts yesterday said Barclays' results were poor when compared, for example, with the results for Lloyds TSB, where profits had risen by 10 per cent. John Aitken, an analyst with Rabobank, said: "We are disappointed that Barclays were not more specific on cost cutting." He pointed out that the cost-income ratio of many of the high street banks was some 20 per cent lower than Barclays.

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Bank branches	staff	cost/income ratio
Lloyds TSB	2500	77,000 45.6%
Barclays	1950	80,000 66.0%
NatWest	1730	67,500 68.6%
HSEC	1700	42,600 54.6%
Halifax	859	30,723 40.3%
Abbey National	800	27,000 41.2%



Sir Peter Middleton announced extensive cost-cutting

Boots foots £63m bill for share scheme

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM AND GRAHAM SEARDEANT

COMPANIES will face increasing pressure from shareholders to come clean about the cost of financing their options schemes following a decision by Boots, the high street pharmacist, to take a charge of £63 million this year.

Boots is setting up a qualifying employee share ownership trust (QUEST) which will hold and distribute shares connected to its save-as-you-earn (SAYE) scheme. The £63 million charge this year — likely to be an annual £20 million in future years — will be for the purchase in the market of enough shares, at 900p per share, to satisfy all existing SAYE options.

Boots said it had decided that buying shares, rather than issuing new ones, is preferable as it avoids diluting existing shareholdings.

Richard Regan, head of investments at the Association of British Insurers, applauded the move. "We welcome any move which sees companies recognising the cost of options," he said. An institutional shareholder said that he would be raising the issue with other companies following the Boots move.

Accountants pointed out that the approach taken by Boots is suited to a company with a large amount of cash at its disposal and modest expansion plans. Many other companies want to invest whatever cash they have in acquisitions or organic growth. The disadvantage to a company of acquiring the shares is that it hits the bottom line. If new shares are issued, the costs are passed straight to reserves.

David Thompson, finance director, said: "We should not be deterred by the accounting treatment from doing what is right for shareholders."

Efforts to make accounting rules on executive options reflect the true cost to shareholders have so far come to little either in the UK or in America, where authorities tried to cost all options for accounting purposes.

DTI seeks evidence of pay moderation

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry is to scrutinise the next round of company annual meetings for evidence that directors are starting to moderate pay awards.

It will be looking for tougher performance targets as pre-arranged action against boardroom excesses Stephen Byers, Trade and Industry Secretary, is preparing to make it easier for shareholders to vote on remuneration packages. The move follows a series of high-profile pay awards such as the £7 million package to the new chief executive of Barclays.

The Accounting Standards Board is starting a study to examine treatment of share options in the same context as rights issues, share buyback and other changes in share capital.

Shares in Boots rose 32.5p to 926.5p as it purchased shares in the market. Analysts said the rise was technical, rather than a reaction to the new policy.

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Janet Bush
spells out her fears
on the euro before
joining the fight

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STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100 6106.1 (+0.4)

FTSE All Share 2706.29 (+33.82)

Nikkei 14222.64 (-177.92)

New York

Dow Jones 3335.65 (+60.76)

S&P Composite 1246.84 (+16.71)

US RATE

Federal Funds 5.75% (unch)

Long bond 98.4% (unch)

Yield 5.27% (unch)

LONDON MONEY

3-month interbank 5.4% (5.3%)

Libor (3m) 116.98 (117.25)

STERLING

New York

S. London 1.6320* (unch)

S. S. 1.6325 (1.6284)

S. SF 1.6317 (1.6253)

S. Yen 129.03 (129.12)

C. Index 101.14 (100.5)

DOLLAR

London

E. 1.1890* (unch)

Yen 110.05 (105.5)

S. S. 106.5 (105.5)

Tokyo close Yen 117.01

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Apr.) \$10.30 (\$10.55)

GOLD

London close \$285.25 (\$288.50)

* denotes midday trading prices

Exchange rates Page 24

ONS jobs threatened by review

By JANET BUSH

ECONOMICS EDITOR

HUNDREDS of jobs are under threat at the Office for National Statistics after a review published yesterday identified potential savings of £20 million a year, a fifth of the ONS budget.

The review by KPMG, the accountants, commissioned by the Treasury last year, suggested that, as part of a continuing drive for efficiency, 350 jobs at the ONS could be cut with a further 680 transferred to the private sector. However, it stopped short of recommending that data collection should be contracted out to the private sector, as some had expected.

KPMG said implementation of the efficiency plan would probably cost £2 million over the next year but would generate savings of almost £12 million in 2000-01, increasing to £20 million a year by 2003-04. Patricia Hewitt, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, said she would consult unions before reacting to the recommendations.

ScotTelecom chief leaves

By CHRIS AYRES

THE managing director of ScotTelecom yesterday abruptly left the company ahead of its expected £2 billion stock market flotation.

Rod Matthews, 56, is credited with creating ScotTelecom, a division of ScottishPower, from scratch in 1994. He also played a big part in ScotTelecom's acquisition last May of Demon Internet, Britain's largest Internet service provider, for £66 million.

ScotTelecom yesterday gave no reason for the departure of Mr Matthews, who was not a board member, and refused to disclose his compensation package. However, it is expected to be worth several hundred thousand pounds.

One analyst said yesterday: "They may have felt that he was the

wrong kind of guy to run a quoted telecoms company. My understanding was that he was a good man but that his face just did not fit." Shares in the company yesterday rose 8p to 602.5p.

ScottishPower has appointed Bill Allan, former chief executive of Cable & Wireless' regional businesses, to replace Mr Matthews. Mr Allan, who is 45, was described by one insider yesterday as "much more conventional" than Mr Matthews.

Although ScottishPower has so far refused to confirm that it is preparing to float ScotTelecom, it yesterday gave its strongest hint yet that a deal is on the cards.

It said: "ScottishPower has recently appointed Goldman Sachs to explore the options open to optimise value for

EU officials raid banks

By RICHARD MILES

EIGHT banks in France, Germany, Italy and Spain were raided by European Commission officials yesterday as part of an investigation into charge-fixing since the launch of the euro.

Karel Van Miert, the Competition Commissioner, said he had authorised the raids after complaints that banks were conspiring to fix fees on foreign exchange and international payments amid concerns that consumers are paying excessive charges.

Mr Van Miert said: "There could have been agreements and co-operation between banks which could have gone as far as fixing of charges on exchange operations and costs on international payments after the introduction of the euro.

"We will see if procedures have

been engaged in which violate European competition regulations. It is a very clear warning. Competition must take place."

He named the banks as Deutsche Bank, Dresdner, Crédit Agricole, Société Générale, Banca Commerciale Italiana, Cassa di

Even in a mature democracy such as ours in Britain, a line of least resistance approach to the greatest issues of state can develop. So it is — dangerously — with the European single currency.

Since the euro was launched, a small camp of previous don't knows appear, according to a recent *Guardian/ICM* poll, to have decided that they would now vote yes in a referendum on Britain's membership of the euro. Judging from conversations I have had since the euro started, the thinking behind this switch seems to go something like this: the euro has worked and if it is all right for the rest of Europe, it should be all right for us; now that the euro has started, it is inevitable Britain will have to join and there is no point fighting against it.

This air of resignation — still a minority view — is no doubt welcome to those in Government who appear to regard Britain's membership of economic and monetary union as an article of faith, including, we believe, the Prime

Minister. If the sense of inevitability is gently encouraged, so the democratic majority against Britain joining will be gradually moved away, whether or not Gordon Brown's economic tests for entry are met and whether or not the argument has genuinely been won.

Coupled with such subliminal encouragement from the Government is something of the atmosphere that reigned on the Continent in the years before the euro became fact. Speaking out against the great project was treated as unpatriotic. Economists working for state-owned French banks were actually barred from expressing any negative sentiments about France's *franc fort* policy and the drive towards EMU. Dissenting voices were subtly — and, in the case of Bernard Connolly, summarily — marginalised.

Britain is (I hope) too individual-

istic a country easily to bend to the propaganda of Government. It is as unlikely to accept a bald statement from the Government that the euro is good for you as it is to accept Tony Blair's assurances on genetically modified food or a previous administration's assurance that post-Chernobyl lamb was absolutely free from radiation.

Nevertheless, there is a palpable reluctance among many senior members of the establishment to oppose the Government's pro-euro line publicly, whatever their private convictions, so great is the new Labour majority and so far-reaching its patronage as it tries to build a coalition of the centre to embed semi-permanent power. There are people at the highest levels in both the Bank of England and the Treasury who have serious doubts about Britain joining the euro, but they are not heard.



The question of whether Britain should join the single currency is of the most intense national gravity — too important for opinion of whichever colour to be silent. There is an extremely important economic debate to be had about the wisdom of the project and of Britain's potential part in it. The Chancellor's five economic tests for entry — America and apple pie aspirations such as whether Britain will prosper and create jobs — do

not begin to touch on the central economic issues thrown up by any single currency zone, wherever in the world. The argument, a month into an unprecedented experiment in economic and financial engineering, that the euro has "worked", betrays a deep misunderstanding.

There is also a political debate of matchless historical importance to be had, not just about whether the British people want, irrevocably, to give up national sovereignty, but also about the direction that the European Union, now dominated politically by the 11-member eurozone, is taking. Expressing concern about the political future of Europe and Britain's relationship with it is too often belittled by some euro-enthusiasts who dismiss questioning souls as backward-looking, xenophobic, anti-European, little Englanders.

Britain, as a committed mem-

ber of the EU, ought to be asking serious questions about the political direction of Europe, as should every other member.

We should be talking about the lack of democratic accountability of Europe's institutions — the European Commission and the European Central Bank. We should be discussing how best to integrate the former communists nations to the east into a democratic Europe, a far more difficult task now the euro is here. We should not assume that, within the EU, qualified majority voting should become the norm — even for matters of foreign and security policy. We should constantly be questioning the pace of integration apparently being advocated by France and Germany.

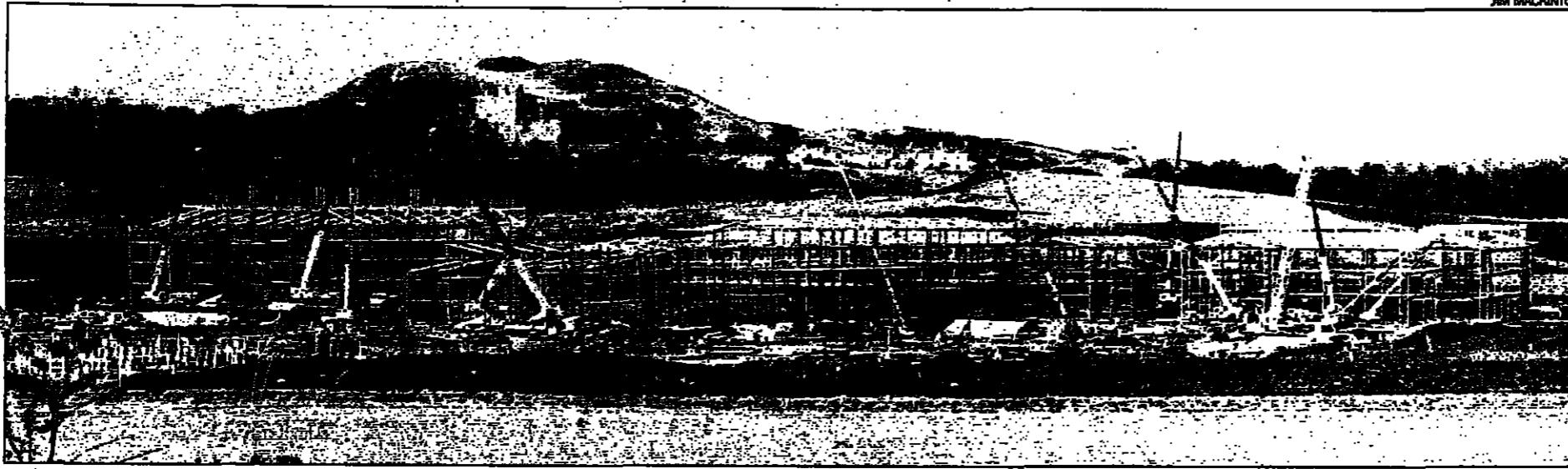
Some voices in Britain are now arguing that, because of the creation of euroland and its central Europe's path and the model of its de-

velopment is now set in stone: irreversible, unchangeable. But history does not work like this. Much is still up for grabs, the European model is still forming and it still has many flaws. There are still choices about the future to be made. Just because the euro has been launched does not mean different ideas of the future have been permanently sidelined.

These voices also argue that, outside euroland, Britain will have no leverage to determine the future — a *reductio ad absurdum* that we must give up our sovereignty to retain any power. That, if true, would be a ample testament to how undemocratic a beast a euroland-dominated EU is becoming.

I must, at this point, declare an interest. This is my last column for *The Times*, probably this year, because I am taking a leave of absence to serve as director of a new non-party political group, to be launched shortly, that will argue for a constructive, committed and imaginative British approach to Europe but against Britain's membership of the single currency.

Resuscitated PFI offers ailing health service the kiss of life



Construction work on the New Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh and adjoining medical school is one of the largest PFI health schemes in the UK. The cost has been put at £180 million

The Private Finance Initiative (PFI) is much maligned and much misunderstood. It is not a privatisation nor is it a mechanism for transferring responsibility for clinical services to the private sector. It is merely a way for National Health Service trusts to obtain non-clinical services. What PFI seeks to achieve is for the NHS Trusts to determine the services they need and then contract with the private sector to provide them. It is not the private sector which determines, for example, the bed number or the clinical mix of services within a hospital.

In theory, PFI allows trusts to determine how much an asset-based service — typically a hospital — should cost over its useful life and budget accordingly. All things being equal, this should reduce cost and increase value for money for the trust. It also means that a trust has the sort of access to capital based on its needs rather than on the constraints set by the Treasury. The trust will have a competition between various private sector suppliers but will only choose a winner if it offers better value for money than the cost when compared with the public sector cost for the same service.

When PFI was first introduced progress was slow. There were many reasons, including too many projects put forward, with little sense of priorities, and many of these projects were poorly defined and unaffordable. There was also a concern in the financial markets that PFI projects may be *ultra vires*. This was because the powers of the NHS trusts would not allow them to



CHRIS ELLIOTT says radical thinking will enable the private sector, through the Private Finance Initiative, to help the National Health Service

enter into these long, complex and large deals. Shortly after coming into power, Labour made two decisions that have significantly improved the situation. First, the NHS (Private Finance Act 1997) solved the *ultra vires* problem. Secondly, the Health Minister identified 14 projects which would be given priority. These actions have led to deals to build 13 new hospitals with a capital value of some £1.7 billion being signed since May 1997. Many of these have successfully started construction.

Despite the NHS securing 13 new hospitals, which it otherwise could not have afforded, PFI is still attracting flak. Many people question how PFI can deliver value for money when government borrowing is cheaper than privately borrowed capital. The answer is that PFI works because it is not simply the private sector financing exactly what the public sector has historically done. The fundamental issue is that the public sector contracts with the private sector to design, build and operate the hospital as well as finance it. In essence this means that the NHS can pass on the problem of building and owning assets — and providing related non-clinical services — to the private sector and concentrate on the issue of providing patient care.

As the market has developed, new players have been tempted in and more innovative financing techniques attempted — including long-term, fixed-rate and index-linked bonds in the debt markets as well as private equity. These developments have increased competition and brought down the costs of PFI to the trusts.

First, there must be more standardisation of contracts. This has been agreed by most parties but has yet to be imple-

mented. Once agreed these standards must be monitored and enforced. However, standardisation should not be seen as a one-way bet as there is a risk that standardisation may lead to a suppression of innovation. PFI is still new and the acceptance and pricing of risk by the private sector is likely to change over time. If standardisation prohibits this change, the pricing of risk could be set in a time warp, which is likely to lead to diminishing value for money for the public sector.

Secondly, PFI must become more flexible. It is extremely unlikely that the needs of a trust will remain constant throughout the contract period (generally

30 years). The management of this change must be accommodated within the same value-for-money criteria as the original contract, which given the current inflexible nature of the contracts will be difficult.

It is here where the concept of partnership between the public and private sector is most beneficial.

Thirdly, smaller projects should not necessarily be financed as stand-alone project finance structures. They need to be financed from diversified bal-

ance sheets of significant size so they can be financed more as an incremental investment rather than a start-up investment.

Finally, more risk should be transferred to the private sector to ensure that the public sector does not have to consolidate the expenditure onto PSBR in the year in which the contract is signed.

How can all this be achieved? The variability in contract terms can best be overcome by centralising procurement within the NHS. This will ensure best practice is exercised across all deals and that the benefit of valuable resources is maximised and recycled in a positive way. This has been achieved by the Highways Agency and the Prison Service.

If PFI is to become more flexible it must accommodate lower levels of financial gearing. The providers of the equity must be willing to accept greater uncertainty and must be willing to actively manage the risk that will be passed to them. The management of these risks should be seen to be in partnership with the public sector. The most straightforward, yet radical, way for this to be achieved is for the public sector to hold an equity stake in the PFI companies. This stake should be seen as a commercial investment and not as a monitoring and prohibiting shareholding. This would further enhance the benefit received by the public sector. Joint shareholding should encourage the PFI company to develop objectives acceptable to both public and private sectors. In order to overcome some of the conflicts of interest that are created by this structure, the public sector equity should be held centrally

and managed by the same entity which is responsible for procurement as discussed above. This would also encourage the evaluation of PFI investments on a portfolio basis within the public sector.

The public investment should be managed against clear, transparent and quantifiable objectives. A government minority stake would be necessary to ensure the correct accounting treatment. Government would get value for its investment because as projects mature it would have the opportunity to recycle its capital as incremental value was created, hence the public sector would get more for its money.

These changes may require radical changes in thinking, but now is the time for radical action. The first wave of PFI projects has shown the doubts that the private and public sector can work together to construct, finance and manage public sector services. It has been demonstrated that the current model works. We now need to show that this model can be enhanced and that genuine partnership can be achieved to manage public services in a rapidly changing environment. The successes of the recent past should be seen as a start rather than a solution.

Chris Elliott is a managing director of Barclays Capital and runs the Barclays UK Infrastructure Fund. He is a former member of the PFI Panel.

□ **TOMORROW**: can we afford new blockbuster drugs such as Viagra? Sir Richard Sykes, chairman of Glaxo Wellcome, argues that we have to take a long, hard look at what is given for free on the NHS.

Steel industry will have to bite the bullet

The stock price of Rio Tinto, the world's largest mining group, took a tumble yesterday, losing 4 per cent in a few hours. Such froths are commonplace at Rio, but this time the reason for the fall was not a collapse in copper or coal prices but the state of the Japanese steel industry.

Rio is a big producer of iron ore, a core ingredient of steel, and yesterday Hamersley Iron, Rio's Australian producing subsidiary, announced price cuts of 10 to 11 per cent in its annual bargaining round with the big Japanese steel producers. Hamersley said: "Japanese crude steel production is at its lowest level in 27 years and shows signs of further deterioration."

Faced with weak domestic markets, Japanese mills are cutting back production. Nippon Steel will make a loss, and our own British Steel will lose some £200 million this year and at least half that amount next year. A worldwide glut is causing pain everywhere, raising the threat of trade disputes and increasing trade tensions between the US and Europe.

Only last Friday, the US commerce department set duties on Japanese and Brazilian steel producers in response to an intense lobby from US steel producers. American producers complain that foreign steel makers are "dumping" hot-rolled coil (a commodity steel product) at uneconomic prices, creating unfair competition and threatening US jobs.

Similar cries have been made in Europe over the product, which suffered a 35 per cent price collapse over three months as imports flooded into euroland. In November, a European steel lobby group, Eurofer, launched an anti-dumping complaint with the European Commission against Taiwan, India, Iran, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and South Africa.

The immediate cause is the collapse in consumption in South-East Asia. The region consumed some 75 million tonnes of imported steel at its peak, about 10 per cent of world production, but at the same time was itself producing 300 million tonnes to satisfy a construction boom.

Plummeting demand left Asian producers and suppliers to the region floundering, so they targeted stable markets in Europe and the US, flooding them with cheap product.

Washington want us to believe this is a war between good, honest traders and nasty dumpers, but such a simplistic view obscures real structural problems. The world produces some 750 million tonnes but needs just 680 million. The collapse of the Russian and Ukrainian economies left huge, inefficient steel industries with no domestic market.

Erecting barriers to cheap imports hurts consumers, but Colin Campbell, steel analyst at ABN Amro, also sees dangers to the steel industry in protectionism. "There are undoubtedly people out there selling below the cash cost of production, but protectionist measures could be bad news for the industry. It reduces the speed of change."

Europe's private sector steel industry is less than ten years old and has only just begun a slow process of consolidating as it moves out of the state's embrace. In 1997 Thyssen and Krupp joined forces, followed later by Usinor of France taking over Belgium's Cockerill Sambre and Arbed acquiring a 35 per cent stake last year in Aceralia of Spain.

Alan Coats of Merrill Lynch reckons that the industry needs to move towards a small number of international champions capable of supplying high-quality steel products to manufacturers around the world. Such a move could be led by the automotive industry, and he points out the move by Usinor into the Brazilian steel industry, encouraged by car manufacturers.

But the process will be slow and painful and subject to political pressures. Usinor was forced to give job guarantees to Belgium in its takeover of Cockerill. British Steel is trying for the second time to acquire Salzgitter, the German mill currently in talks with Luxembourg's Arbed. Given Britain's reputation for closing down mills at home, it is unlikely that the government of Lower Saxony, which owns a quarter of Salzgitter, would welcome such a move.

But closures are what the industry needs if Asian demand does not pick up rapidly. As Mr Campbell points out: "What troubles the Americans is not so much the low-quality Russian exports but high-quality and low-cost steel from Korea and Japan."

CARL MORTISHED

Excess fare

I DON'T know how this will play with the electricians, but I hear that Bechtel, the American engineer paraded in to complete the Jubilee Line extension to Canary Wharf and beyond, is on a success fee of £10 million if the trains are running by the millennium.

The total cost of the work is about £13 million, but London Underground has agreed that the Ameri-



where your computer was made, and so when, according to local time, the clock was put in. So if your machine was made in the Far East, it could fail 12 hours or more before the arrival of the millennium in London or New York. I have no idea if the above is true, but it seems to make sense.

Revenge bid?

SOMEONE with a long memory observes the takeover by Prebon Yama of fellow moneybroker M W Marshall with a jaundiced eye and points out that almost two decades ago the boot was on the other foot.

There was great outrage in the early 1980s when Marshall, then owned by Mercantile House, bought Charles Fulton and set about sacking large chunks of the workforce. Banks vowed to withdraw their business, and the indignation in the money markets lasted, ooh, at least a week.

Bits of Fulton were sold off and, in the fullness of time, became Fulton Prebon, which began Prebon Yama, and so on. So will old scores be now settled? Prebon's Patrick Keenan assures me: "If that was a model of how not to achieve a merger, this one is going to be quite different."

FORGET leaves on the line or the wrong sort of snow, this has to be the best excuse yet, from delay-plagued Conner South Central. One of its trains was held up on Monday evening. "We apologise for the five-minute delay at Coulson South," passengers were told. "This was due to the presence on the train of four drug dealers."

Glass apart

AS BARCLAYS announces its results for last year — and wasn't Bob Diamond of Barclays Capital in a bad mood yesterday? — an odd thought strikes me. There have been two new non-executives on the board of Pilkington, the glassmaker, over the past year. They are both former Barclays directors.

One is Oliver Stocken, who was finance director, the other Bill Harrison, who ran BZW. Both left after falling out with Martin Taylor, the former Barclays chief executive. He is, of course, now gone, his departure having been assisted by a Barclays non-executive, Sir Nigel Rudd. Sir Nigel is chairman of Pilkington. It's probably only a coincidence.

MARTIN WALLER

city.diary@the-times.co.uk

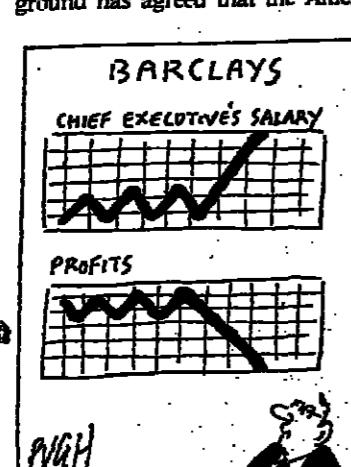


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Low & Bonar sees shares slide as prospects worsen

By PAUL ARMSTRONG

INVESTORS pounded shares of Low & Bonar again yesterday after the packaging group painted a bearish outlook based on lower sales and tighter margins.

Fears that Low's already tough market conditions might deteriorate further saw the share price marked down by nearly 10 per cent to 165p.

The stock has plunged from a high of 420p in June amid worries about the company's sensitivity to the international economic climate and particularly the Asian crisis.

Low yesterday reported that it had made a pre-tax profit of £40.2 million in the year to November 30, down from £47.5 million the previous year and below analysts' expectations.

The result was helped into a pre-tax deficit of £3.4 million after exceptional losses of £49.1 million, most of which stemmed from a book-keeping charge associated with the pur-

chase of its cereal packaging business on the Continent.

However, Low said that it would maintain its final dividend at 11.35p, making 15.85p for the year, compared with 15.6p in the previous year.

Jim Helling, chief executive, said that Low was bracing itself for an increasingly difficult environment where cost control would be critical.

"The economic climate around the world has caused some of our customers' businesses to be flat or even to decline," Mr Helling said.

He said that Low's plastics division had been hit by the downturn in demand for capital machinery, such as tractors and diggers, for which it supplied many parts.

"Our order books declined in the last couple of months of 1998 and in January this year," Mr Helling said.

"There is also some pretty severe price competition in the



Boxed in: Jim Helling saw Low & Bonar's pre-tax profits fall

Tempus, page 26

IT floats will net millions for directors

By CHRIS AYRES

TWO young IT industry executives yesterday looked set to become multimillionaires as their companies, Morse Holdings and Axon Group, decided to go public.

Duncan McIntyre, chief executive of Morse, will see his shares in the company valued at more than £25 million, while Mark Hunter, chief executive of Axon, will see his shares valued at about £20 million. The companies are likely to be valued at £300 million and £100 million respectively.

Mr McIntyre, a 39-year-old former accountant, led a £46 million management buyout of Morse in 1995, with 31, the venture capitalist group, taking a 55 per cent stake in the business. Other shareholders in Morse include PPM Ventures and staff.

Morse also announced yesterday that it had appointed Richard Lapham, vice-chairman of British Aerospace, as a non-executive director. Morse, which helps small and medium-sized companies to install computer hardware and software systems, is expected to raise about 70 million of new cash at its flotation, scheduled to take place before the summer.

Troubled times for Zochonis

By ROBERT LEA

PATERSON ZOCHONIS, purveyors of the Imperial Leather brand of toiletries, reported a catalogue of woes yesterday from worsening credit problems in Russia to consumer depression in Nigeria.

Despite the successful launch of a new shower product, Foamburst, in the UK, the shares fell another 5p to 37 1/4p.

Reporting interim pre-tax profits down by 23 per cent in the six months to November 30 at £11.3 million, the company gave warning that numbers for the full year will not be helped by a £6.3 million charge in the second half, covering its problems in China.

Graham Calder, finance director, said operations in China had been badly hit by competition. In other businesses, Far East profits are beginning to improve after currency devaluations, although "serious" difficulties remain in Eastern Europe. The interim dividend remains at 5.85p.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Oriel unveils £7.5m London hotel plan

ORIEL LEISURE, the budget hotel group backed by English & Overseas Properties and Bankers Trust, is to develop a £7.5 million Holiday Inn Express in Wandsworth, South London. The 148-room hotel, part of the Riverside West residential, leisure and office development near Wandsworth Bridge, will charge about £70 a room when it opens its doors in autumn 2000. The hotel is one of at least 20 that Oriel is planning to develop over the next three years under an agreement with Bass Hotels & Resorts, owner of the Holiday Inn brand. Its first Express opened in Peterborough last November.

Michael Brooker, chief executive of Oriel, said: "In the next few months we're going to announce another seven projects in various parts of the country at a total cost of around £32 million." He said the plan was to expand to a size where Oriel's backers could seek an exit, through a flotation or a trade sale. Oriel moved into budget hotel development three years ago after failing in an attempt to buy Forte's White Hart Hotels chain.

News Ltd phone stake

NEWS LTD, the Australian arm of The News Corporation, has joined forces with Publishing and Broadcasting to invest A\$709 million (about £273 million) in One.Tel, the emerging mobile phone operator. Each will take a 20 per cent stake in One.Tel through a mixture of shares and options, to strengthen the company's expansion into overseas markets. One.Tel shares rose almost 8 per cent to A\$12.63. One.Tel's main competitors in Australia are Telstra, Optus and Vodafone. News Corp is parent company of *The Times*.

Rolls in £150m deal

ROLLS-ROYCE, the aero-engines manufacturer, has signed a contract worth £150 million with British Aerospace for the engines and through-life support of Rolls-Royce Turbomeca Adour Mk 87 engines that will power Australia's Hawk fighter aircraft. The contract covers the 33 aircraft being acquired by the Royal Australian Air Force. Rolls-Royce will manufacture the first batch of Adour engines at its Bristol facility. The first engine is due to be delivered next month to British Aerospace for installation into the first Australian Hawk.

Gearhouse accelerates

GROWTH in events around the world hiring audio-visual and other conference and exhibition equipment helped Gearhouse Group to a 60 per cent rise in profits in the first half of the year, with the company's chairman, Brian North, forecasting considerable scope for growth. Pre-tax profits for the six months to December 31 came in at £2.13 million on turnover up 25 per cent to £37.6 million. Earnings per share were 8.8p (5.4p) and the interim dividend is up to 2.8p from 2.6p.

St Modwen on the up

ST MODWEN PROPERTIES, the property development and investment company based in Birmingham, reported a 19 per cent rise in net assets to 81.8p a share for the year to November 30. Pre-tax profits rose 15 per cent to £15.6 million, with earnings up 12 per cent to 9.2p a share. The total dividend rises 10 per cent to 3.3p a share, with a final 2.3p. The investment property portfolio, including the share of properties in joint ventures, was valued at £160.1 million on November 30, producing a surplus over valuation of £8.5 million.

Picture bright at Quarto

QUARTO GROUP, the publisher of illustrated books, lifted 1998 pre-tax profits to £3.7 million from £2.9 million. Group sales fell 3 per cent to £79.2 million but were £80.5 million at constant currency rates. Earnings rose to 9.8p a share from 7p. The final dividend is held at 2.3p, making 4.5p for the year. The shares rose 7p to 64 1/4p. Laurence Orbach, chairman, said the company expected to improve its competitive position this year, helped by the anticipated return to profitability within the art publishing business.

Macro 4 confident

SHARES in Macro 4 soared nearly 20 per cent after Ronnie Wilson, chief executive, said the company's pipeline of orders for its software supplies was building satisfactorily and that second-half results should continue to show improvement. Pre-tax profits in the six months to December 31 slipped 4 per cent to a little more than £5 million after £1.2 million extra "investment in people". Earnings per share were 16.6p (17.6p) and the interim dividend is unchanged at 10.2p.

Buoyant Compel

THE OUTLOOK is bright for providers of computer services to blue chip companies, according to Neville Davis, chairman and chief executive of Compel, which provides server and IT network support for a range of large organisations. The company's shares climbed 16p to 480p yesterday after the company reported pre-tax profits up 30 per cent to nearly £5 million in the six months to December 31. Earnings per share came in at 11.6p (9p) and the interim dividend rises to 2.4p (2.1p).

No other communications supplier can tick all the boxes.

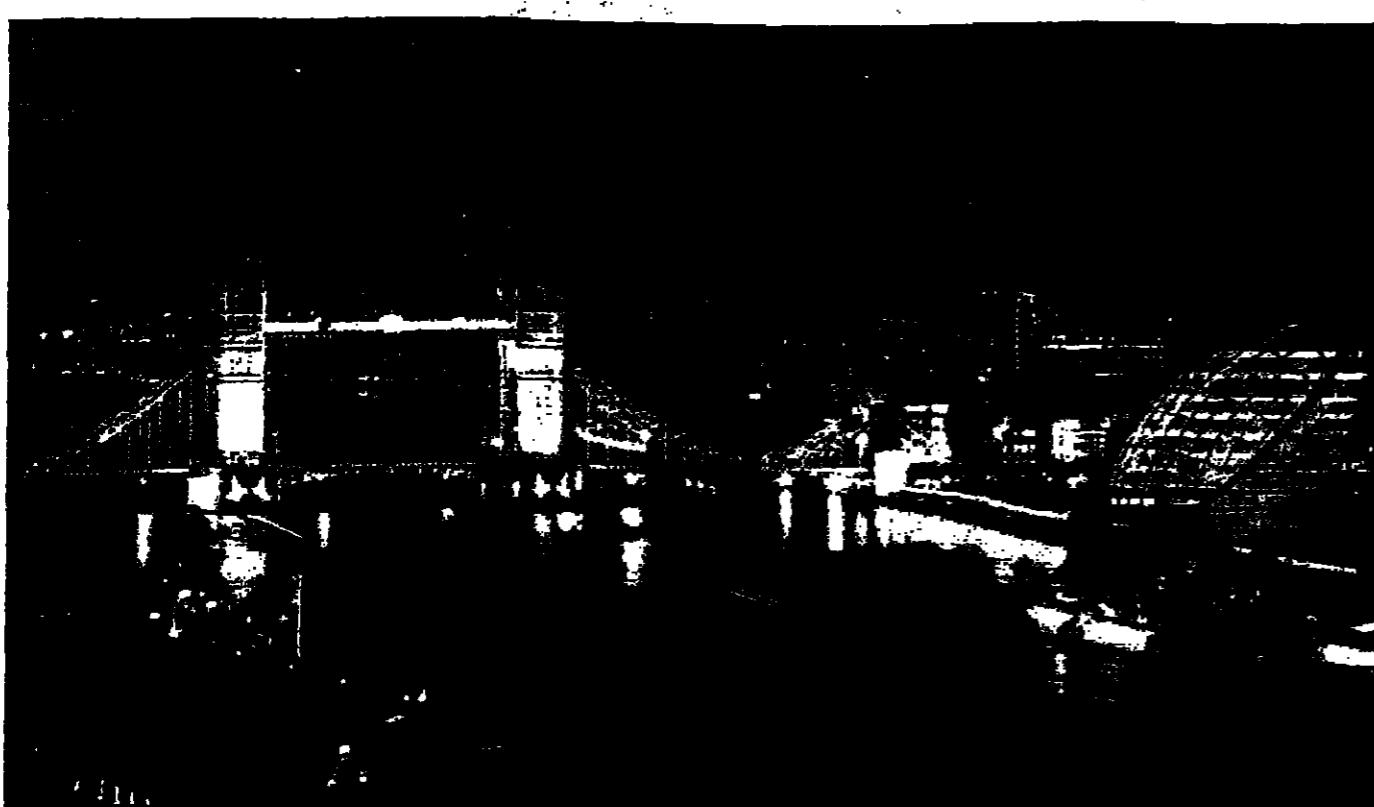
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- ✓ BT spends £280 million every year on research and development in the UK, as part of our commitment to bring customers innovative products and services.
- ✓ With 4,000 products in our UK portfolio, our business team provide a one-stop shop for every communications need, from telephone lines to complex data solutions.
- ✓ BT has a range of business discount plans which can save you money whenever you call.
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- ✓ In business we know efficiency is vital, that's why we have 53,000 engineers working around the clock to ensure our quality of service is second to none.
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- ✓ We ensure that 99.82% of all the calls we handle get through successfully, and we're constantly working to improve this figure.
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'Whose London is it anyway?'



Mixed message: an artist's impression of Sir Norman Foster's design for the mayor of London's office and, right, residents of the Bermondsey council flats which could be demolished because of increasing land values if the offices go ahead

It is the biggest development site in town: 13 acres of mud overlooking the Tower of London. Its value when completed is estimated at £1 billion. And it is also the front-runner for the plum of plums: the office of the new mayor of London, a landmark waterfront building which has been variously described as a glass egg, a soap-dish or a feng shui mask.

This building will be the centrepiece of a huge complex of offices, shops, a 180-bedroom hotel and public spaces, drawn to a masterplan by Sir Norman Foster and Partners. The developers, Citi/Markborough, have a planning application before Southwark Council. A decision is expected soon.

Not before time over the past 20 years a long series of development proposals, including one that was a pastiche of the Palace of Westminster, and another of Venice, have all proved abortive.

This time the developers are playing it by the book. Firms have been hired to listen and learn about local needs, to un-

derstand how people use the area, to inform local communities and to create jobs: some 10,000 jobs are promised (though these, of course, will depend on a successful take-up of the office space). Help is promised with retraining local people.

The plans — which are on view to the public — proclaim the "mixed-use" development as "a new heart for Bermondsey". The most successful places round the world, the publicity says, "are those that put people first... places where people can meet, explore, talk, shop, eat, relax and play".

So how does the community feel? Most of them live south of the walled-off site, many in council-owned mansion blocks, and on the whole they are happy with the idea of offices nearby. There is some concern that the plans allow for a skating rink, health club and a

walkway but no housing, cinema or children's facilities. For once, though, nobody is blaming the developers.

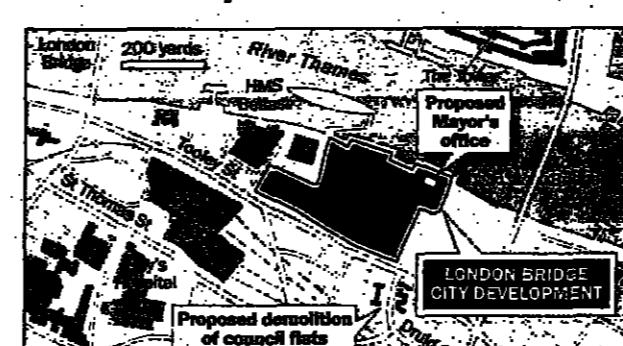
"We would have included social housing if it had been part of the council's planning brief," says Kevin McGovern, the managing director of Citi/Markborough. "And we are talking to a cinema operator."

Childcare facilities? A library? These too "could" happen as part of the planning gain settlement" (the money, or equivalent, given to the planning authority as part of the planning permission).

The exact contents of the site are open to negotiation. But behind the details lies a bigger picture, and a greater fear for the residents, some of whom have lived there since the Blitz. If London Bridge City is built, property values in the im-

mediate area will soar. The council, with its new self-financing housing programme, might well consider selling its estates locally and reinvesting the profits elsewhere in the borough.

Indeed, a proposal to demolish and sell three of the estates



London Bridge 200m River Thames

Proposed Mayor's office

Proposed demolition of council flats

LONDON BRIDGE CITY DEVELOPMENT

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Indeed, a proposal to demolish and sell three of the estates

anyway? A question, perhaps, for the new mayor, who should be able to move into the new HQ next summer, enjoying a view of the Thames and the Tower at present seen only by the residents.

But the plot of land they occupy is now valued at £22.5 million, a tempting target for the council. After demolition, the tenants fear that they could be rehoused piecemeal all over the borough and the (few) leaseholders served with compulsory purchase orders, ending up with very little.

Michael Irvine, the director of housing at Southwark Council, denies any hidden agenda.

"These are just proposals," he says. "Nothing has been decided. We are carrying out a programme of housing improvement funded by the Government's Capital Receipts Initiative (CRI), and therefore have conducted several feasibility studies."

But the residents know that

the £12 million CRI money is not enough to fund Southwark's housing programme.

The council needs more.

There is a strong community spirit among the Blitz veterans and young council tenants

"We already have a Berlin Wall," she says. "Today Street."

In the wider context there is

concern that government guidelines on affordable housing are not being met.

George Nicholson, of the pressure group Communities and Homes in Central London, says: "There is a new national policy on enforceable levels of affordable housing to reduce social exclusion. Yet this is being floated by many redevelopment plans."

Or, as Simon Hughes puts it: "What would the money equivalent of a council flat buy round here?"

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Freedom to increase excise rates

Regina v Commissioners of Customs and Excise and Others, Ex parte Shepherd Neame Ltd

Before Lord Justice Simon Brown, Lord Justice Auld and Lord Justice Ward

Judgment February 12

There was no obligation under Community law on the United Kingdom to abstain from making increases in the UK rate of excise duty.

The Court of Appeal so held in a reserved judgment when dismissing an appeal by Shepherd Neame Ltd from the refusal by the Queen's Bench Divisional Court (Lord Justice May and Mr Justice Moses) (*The Times* February 2, 1998; [1998] 1 CMLR 1139) of an application for judicial review of the rate of excise duty brought into effect by section 8 of the Finance (No 2) Act 1997.

Mr Michael Beloff, QC, and Mr Clive Lewis for the appellants; Mr Ross Cranston, QC, Solicitor General, and Mr David Anderson for the Treasury, the Commissioners of Customs and Excise and the Attorney-General.

LORD JUSTICE SIMON BROWN said that the UK's rate of excise duty on beer was about seven times that of France. Not surprisingly, there was large-scale tax-induced cross-border shopping and increased smuggling.

Not surprisingly, Mr Kent bewailed, like the applicants, close to cross-channel rail and ferry services complained of damage to their trade. But the question before their Lordships was whether the applicants had a grievance in law.

The applicants' complaint was directed to the last two rate increases, of 3 per cent in the 1997 budget and 3.2 per cent in the 1998 budget.

Those increases, the applicants argued, inflation-linked though they were, took the United Kingdom further away from the greater harmonisation of excise duties necessary for the proper functioning

of the EU internal market and were thus incompatible with EC law.

The 1997 increase, announced on July 2, 1997 and brought into effect on January 1, 1998 by section 8 of the 1997 Act, was the subject of the applicants' first challenge, which was dismissed by the Divisional Court.

Leave to appeal was refused successively by the Divisional Court and Lord Justice Buxton but was granted by Sir Richard Scott, the Vice-Chancellor, and Lord Justice Schiemann without argument, on the basis that the case raised issues of constitutional importance.

Leave to challenge the 1998 budget increase, announced on March 17, 1998 and brought into effect on January 1, 1999, was refused by Mr Justice Collins in the light of the Divisional Court's dismissal of the first application.

However, the eventual rate system introduced in 1998 by the Council's adoption of three Directives under article 99 consisted solely of minimum rates together with harmonised structures and common rules for holding and movement of excisable goods.

Directive 92/84/EEC (the Rates Directive) (OJ 1992 L36/239) provided for minimum rates of excise duty on the basis of a report from the Commission, which examined the rates of duty laid down here and, acting unanimously, shall adopt the necessary measures.

In a 1995 report the Commission said: "1.7 In deciding to adopt a system of minimum rates, the Council clearly felt that market forces should be the driving force behind approximation."

Article 99 of the EC Treaty was at the heart of the applicants' case and provided: "Member states shall take all reasonable measures ... to ensure fulfilment of the obligations arising out of this Treaty or resulting from action taken by the institutions of the Community. They shall facilitate the achievement of the common policy: 'Kramer v United Kingdom' (1979) ECR 2923 and *Commission v United Kingdom* (1980) ECR 2403."

Indeed, His Lordship agreed that the duties of the EC Treaty were to be linked to the driving force behind approximation.

Mr Beloff sought to invoke article 5, in effect, to place constraints on each member state's fiscal sovereignty despite the absence of any unanimous agreement to that effect. That was plainly impermissible. There was no warrant for it either in Community legislation or any other jurisdiction.

His Lordship agreed, as had the Divisional Court, Mr Beloff's argument based on the trilogy of cases concerned with fish stock conservation in the context of the common fisheries policy: *Kramer* (1979) ECR 2923, *France v United Kingdom* (1979) ECR 2923 and *Commission v United Kingdom* (1980) ECR 2403.

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Pablo Picasso
through his
own camera
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THEATRE

A canteen
of laughs with
Richard Wilson
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Fishing vainly for English oddities

OPERA: In Cardiff, Peter Stein's new WNO staging of *Peter Grimes* misses the target, says Rodney Milnes

If *Peter Grimes* is one of the most English of all operas — even among the output of Britten, that most English of composers — then what outsiders bring to bear on it has to be interesting. Welsh National Opera's new production is conducted by its Italian musical director, Carlo Rizzi, and produced by its most eminent guest, the German director Peter Stein. Of course it's good, but also in many ways curiously unsatisfying.

Rizzi leads a high-octane, pretty relentlessly driven performance. The pluses are brilliant playing from the WNO Orchestra — the storm interlude makes the opening of *Otello* sound like a light shower — and a barrage of well-disciplined sound from the famous chorus, though when both are going at full tilt in the small and boxy New Theatre the sheer decibels teeters on the pain threshold.

Possible minuses involve a lack of light and shade, of breadth of lyricism and irony. If the chorus gallops cheerfully through "we live and let live", the fact that they mean precisely the opposite is less plain. You often feel the soloists, who sing very loudly a lot of the time, need more room to convey subtleties. In its violence, momentum and panache, this *Grimes* is a bit like the Charge of the Light Brigade: magnificent, but...

There is a similar lack of light and shade in Stein's direction. *Grimes*, like *The Turn of the Screw*, can be about more

or less anything you want it to be about (for another German, Joachim Herz, it was all about economic and social mobility). Does *Grimes* beat up his apprentices? It's not in the script, and many commentators insist that any abuse is in the minds of the community. But Stein's *Grimes*, John Daszak, hurls his apprentice — a perfectly heart-breaking performance by young Iain Goosney — about the stage with violent abandon, leaving us in no doubt as to his propensities. Which, I would suggest, undermines much of the point of Britten's opera as opposed to Crabb's poem.

Are Ellen Orford and Captain Balstrode *Grimes*'s only friends or his worst enemies? Both characters remain curiously undefined; Ellen neither warmly maternal nor an interfering busybody, Balstrode — well, a cipher. What went on in all those weeks of rehearsal that Stein demands, and gets?

Class, that most English of concerns, is muddled. Boles is too dapper to be a Methodist, Carter Hobson, the town bully, is not an artisan, and leads the manhunt because he wants to, not because he's ordered to. The dole-feeding Mrs Sedley is a figure of fun, but the buffoon Swallow isn't. These quintessentially English creatures have eluded Stein.

There is light and shade in the stage pictures, mostly thanks to Heinrich Brünke's glorious lighting of costumes inspired by Frank Meadow Sutcliffe's Whistley photographs. Stefan Mayer's set is

bit boxy and, like the costumes, reminiscent of Elijah Moshinsky's much sharper Covent Garden *Grimes*, is redeemed by an atmospherically lit backdrop and three beautifully made fishing boats. A garish strip-lighting frame should be dispensed with forthwith.

After an uneasy start, Daszak sang the title role extremely expressively, with plangent

lyricism in the hut scene and impressive body to his tone in the finale. Janice Watson's Ellen had abundant sweetness of tone but too few consonants. Donald Maxwell (Balstrode), Ann Howard (Auntie), Peter Brondum (Boles), Peter Savidge (Keene), Alan Ewing (Hobson), were all very good and would be even better were Rizzi to relax the pace just a little.

This basic problem was compounded by the Croatian director, Kresimir Dolenc. Much energy had been expended on interesting mime and unhelpful sound-track effects; if only half as much energy had been expended on telling the students that their first task is to address notes and words to the audience, not across stage to each other or — with depressing frequency — upstage.

Few of the poor soloists emerged unscathed. Shona Allen (Mother Marie) is already a confident performer and almost alone in the cast suggested that she cared about words. Edel O'Brien (Old Prioress) made much of what must be the most harrowing death scene in all opera — a remarkable achievement from one so young. Ksenia Eremina Jones had her moments as Blanche. Others might have fared better if they had been properly directed and more sympathetically accompanied. Honestly, students deserve better than this.

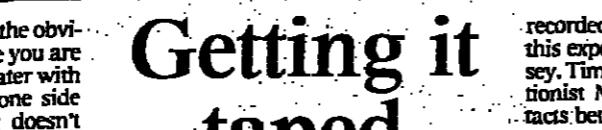
GRIMES

RODNEY MILNES

HOPE on the Waterfront is not the obvious place for a concert. But once you are in your seat, looking over the water with the Royal Liver Buildings on one side and the Tate on the other, it doesn't seem so unlikely after all. And the bright, clear sound settles it.

One advantage of the new series of concerts presented by Psappha in association with Hope University College is that Liverpool composers have an opportunity to be heard in their own city. On this occasion it was Robin Hartwell, whose *A Story Recounted* for prerecorded tape and live percussion found a natural place in a programme with Stockhausen's *Kontakte* as its main feature.

A Story Recounted, though not as ambitious in structure as *Kontakte*, is based on an ingenious two-part idea: the second part for percussion alone attempts to recall the first part for tape and percussion together and produces something which is recognisably the same but intriguingly different. It is unu-



Getting it taped

CONCERT
Psappha
Hope University College
Liverpool

sual in that it derives at least as much from the composer's ear as from his technical expertise. It requires the percussionist — Tim Williams in this case — to apply his hearing no less sensitively.

In *Kontakte* it is hard to escape the feeling that Stockhausen was not always hearing what he was scoring for piano and percussion in relation to his pre-

recorded tape. There were moments in this expert performance by Richard Casey, Tim Williams and the sound projectionist, Matthew Fairclough when contacts between the different sound sources were perceptively made, just as there were others when they seemed to have nothing to say to each other. And there is nothing in *Kontakte* to match the wit in the exchanges between piano and tape in Jonathan Harvey's *Tomeau de Messiaen*.

Confronted with the extraordinary variety of sound Anthony Powers finds in a solitary clarinet in his *Sea/Air*, you might wonder if there is any need for electronic extension of natural sound at all. No tape manipulation could have produced a better diminuendo than Dov Goldberg at the end — and there would not have been the added poignancy of having it walked over by footsteps passing by on the Albert Dock outside.

GERALD LARNER



John Daszak (Peter Grimes) and Donald Maxwell (Balstrode) in the new WNO staging

Raise the volume and risk the fury

Ask any sound engineer at the opera what he does, and the answer is likely to be "as little as possible". Acoustic intervention, otherwise known as amplification, is strictly taboo. Occasionally English National Opera will admit to "enhancing" dialogue for operetta. When amplification was overused in Weill's *Mahagonny* nobody was pleased, and the experiment has not been repeated.

When the Royal Opera staged *Otello* and *La traviata* at the Albert Hall, a few microphones were discreetly hidden in the wings. But the philosophy, according to Covent Garden's head of sound, Eric Pressley, was to "make every attempt to avoid amplification by finding a simple acoustic solution". His advice to colleagues is "sit on your hands". But at midnight last Saturday, seven pairs of hands set to work very busily indeed on a network of microphones and loudspeakers within the Albert Hall to prepare London for a *Tosca* the like of which it has never heard before.

Since big-spectacle opera first hit the arenas in the early 1980s, the impresario Raymond Gubbay has mounted six shows in collaboration with Autograph Sound Recording, a company now renowned for its sound-designing of big West End musicals but which, with delightful irony, was born 25 years ago from the impulses of two particularly long-sighted sound engineers from the Royal Opera House. They saw, and heard, the shape of things to come and, after a little practice in shows such as *A Chorus Line*, *Evita* and *Cats*, their company was ready and waiting when Gubbay's *La Bohème*, *Carmen* and *Madam Butterfly* appeared on the scene.

Bobby Aitken was Autograph's sound designer for both *Carmen* and *Butterfly* —

Opera buffs may cry "foul", but *Tosca* is going electric at the Albert Hall, says Hilary Finch



Bobby Aitken: "making audible what is there"

and, pilloried by critics, alternately loved and hated by opera-goers, he has survived the steep learning curve to arrive at *Tosca*. "It's not about creating a sound spectacular," he says. "We're working intimately with the sound of each voice, and with that eternally problematic Albert Hall acoustic. All we have to do is to make audible what is there. And when Amanda Holden has made such a fine translation, it demands that you hear every word. My aim is that, no matter where you're sitting, you should be able to close your eyes and imagine where every singer is. The amplified sound is an aural stimulus, to reinforce the visual facts."

Radio mikes are essential to Aitken's methods. To opera pros these are an abomination, but Aitken insists they are necessary. "If a singer moves more than ten degrees off-axis in the Albert Hall, you have lost the sound."

And there's another problem. "Sound travels very slowly. As soon as a performer moves 15 metres away from a loudspeaker, the sound from the speaker will arrive at the listener before it's been read on the lips. We're developing a whole new system for *Tosca* which involves delaying the output of the performers' radio mikes until it matches that from any given area."

In David Freeman's new production, *Tosca* will be played in the round, and the singers are constantly on the move. Aitken is experimenting for the first time with placing loudspeakers on the floor. "It's challenging, and a bit scary. Usually the principal system is 'Rown' — it operates in the air. But here, the main system will be on the floor. We'll be trying to cheat the sound image back down again."

Aitken refuses to tamper with "equalising" the singers' individual voices — and is also all too aware that he has to please several thousand totally differently tuned pairs of ears in the audience. "All I want to do is to maintain the credibility of a work which is essentially fragile, vulnerable, and on a human scale."

And not to underestimate Puccini. *Tosca* was so dramatically advanced from anything Puccini had done before that even his librettists doubted its theatrical viability. The opening chords were vibrant with revolutionary new harmonic devices. "And Raymond Gubbay," adds Aitken, "is determined that the audience shall know the overture has begun."

• *Tosca* opens at the Albert Hall (071-589 8212) tomorrow

30p

THE TIMES

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CHANGING TIMES

■ GALLERIES

Pablo the snapper

VISUAL ART: Richard Cork on the Barbican's fine survey of the ways in which photography influenced the great man

ARTS

■ WORLD MUSIC

Barbican goes African

Picasso's life through a lens

Of all 20th-century artists, Picasso was the one who posed most willingly for the camera, allowing it to scrutinise him in every conceivable mood. As a result, Picasso's own photographic image is as recognisable as any of the artworks he produced.

Until now, the full extent of his involvement with the camera has never been explored. But a large, engrossing survey at the Barbican Art Gallery rectifies the omission, revealing the complex, multi-faceted nature of Picasso's attitude to photography. He used it in different ways according to his protean needs. The camera never threatened to supersede his primary commitment to painting, drawing and sculpture, but it did feed his art, no least by helping him to assess the work evolving in his studio. By taking shots of paintings as they developed, he was able to evaluate their progress. These small, faded photographs, often blurred or faintly exposed, are seldom compelling images in their own right. They do, however, provide fascinating evidence of key paintings at an unfinished stage, and even of works subsequently destroyed.

More exciting are the photographs Picasso took and used as the starting-point for paintings. By the time he had finished with it, the original shot often underwent a startling transformation. In 1908 he photographed his mistress Fernande Olivier with a restless girl, Dolly van Dongen, on her lap. Behind them looms part of a titanic Cubist painting called *Three Women*, its power threatening to overwhelm the figures seated in front. But in a *Mother and Child* canvas executed the same year, Fernande and Dolly are metamorphosed into raw, ferociously simplified beings. Picasso reduces facial features to *brutal minimum*. Fernande's hair looks like a blue hat perched on her pink scalp. As for the unsuspecting Dolly, she resembles a wild-eyed carving daubed with thick almond eyes and slanting shadows scored harshly across her cheek.

In this instance, Picasso seems bent on stressing the difference between photographic fidelity and the painter's provocative freedom. By the time he trained his camera on the ancient Spanish hill-town of Horta de Ebro, however, the gap separating the two media had narrowed. Adopting a high vantage that enabled him to gaze down on a huddle of tiled roofs and bare walls, Picasso produced a photograph strikingly akin to his Cubist painting of the scene. Through his viewfinder, the houses' forms were already split into dramatically contrasted masses by the strong sunlight. The angle he chose flattened them

‘He used the camera according to his protean needs’

era. *The Soler Family*, grouped rigidly around a potted palm and other studio bric-a-brac, are all arrayed in their Sunday best in an anonymous 1903 photograph. While retaining some of their poses, Picasso transfers them to the informality of a picnic on the grass. The outcome is bizarre, for the figures are caught disconcertingly between politeness and relaxation as they encircle food, wine and even a dead rabbit stretched out on the white sheet.

The show's great revelation, however, centres on new sources for *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, the revolutionary painting that kick-started the entire Cubist movement. Art historians have noted that the brusque distortions of the women on the right reveal Picasso's awareness of African carving. But nobody paid attention to some arresting photographs of African tribal life in his own collection. Taken by Edmond Fortier in 1906, only a year before *Les Demoiselles* was painted, these postcard-size images stress the sculptural presence of African girls and women. Standing or sitting in their villages, they usually look grave and expose ample breasts with an instinctive, statuesque stillness. Most of the prints show single figures, and the Barbican survey displays a variety of studies that Picasso may have excused with their stimulus in mind.

But one in particular, a photograph called *Types of Women*, shows no fewer than nine West African women in a group. Three squat on the ground, carefully holding bowls of grain, while the others

stand with awesome dignity behind. The monochrome colotype print brings out their carved quality, and the women with arms lifted to support vessels on their heads or shoulders may well have inspired the angular, raised arms of the two central figures in *Les Demoiselles*. It would be easy to exaggerate the connections between *Types of Women* and Picasso's masterpiece. A whole variety of stimuli, ranging from El Greco to Ingres, lies behind *Les Demoiselles*, and its stridency is far more alarming than anything in Fortier's photograph. From now on, though, nobody will be able to discuss Picasso's belligerent canvas without taking his well-hidden cache of African postcards into full account.

Within a few years, though, Cubism had earned enormous admiration within Picasso's circle. He photographed the dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, dressed in a stiff white collar, gazing at paintings. The image of this well-groomed, fastidious man undoubtedly helped Picasso to paint a great Cubist portrait of him in 1910, fragmenting his features into an intricate, almost tessellated structure where different viewpoints are brought into synthesis.

Increasingly, Picasso also liked photographing himself among Cubist works-in-progress. During the First World War, when he was stranded in Paris, he posed for full-length self-portraits in front of a camera equipped with an 'automatic shutter' device. All taken in his Rue Schleicher studio, they offer insights into his differing moods. He dresses as correctly

as a bourgeois businessman in one photograph, cutting a conventional figure frankly at odds with the extreme, near-abstract canvases behind him.

Then he poses in a multicoloured, loose-fitting suit, with trousers slightly rolled up as if preparing to wade through a sea of paint. Soon afterwards, he strips, shedding jacket and trousers for one photograph and then posing only in his underpants. Legs wide apart and torso fully expanded, he stares like a prizefighter at a camera

now placed very low down.

The viewpoint makes Picasso look taller, emphasising his defiant machismo. The older he grew, the more irrepressible his high spirits became. Picasso enjoyed himself hugely with fashion shots culled from *Vogue* magazine, sketching horny salyers in ink who ogle and probe the models posed so coyly beside them. The exhibition ends on a euphoric note, with photographs of the elderly Picasso reaching out to embrace his old friend,

Manuel Pallares. The artist later scribbled on the prints with coloured crayons, turning both men into bacchic grinning roisterers. They sum up the energy and flair that gave Picasso's long career its sustained sense of openness, showing how he used the camera as one weapon among many in his ceaseless campaign against blinkered ways of seeing.

• Picasso and Photography, Barbican Art Gallery, Silk Street, EC2 (0171-322 7105) until Mar 28.

AROUND THE LONDON GALLERIES

THERE is a curious idea around that a location has to be exceptional in order to deserve the attentions of a landscape artist. But what, then, are we to make of a painter like Christopher Bramham, whose new show is nearly all taken up with landscape, but always recording scenes of the utmost ordinariness?

Most of the bigger pictures are of suburban back gardens — presumably what he sees out of his studio window in Richmond — while the smaller are mostly to do with turn-down outhouses and corners of bleak fields. His attitude is possibly rather like that of Thurber, who, when asked why all his women were so unattractive to my men.

Bramham's idea of what constitutes an attractive scene may not initially coincide with ours, but by the sheer force of his fascination he manages to win us round. Also, these are definitely works of art rather than grim records. The colour harmonies are subtle, the compositions finely balanced. Suburbia has not been so transfigured since Lucian Freud gave up painting in Paddington.

Marlborough Fine Art, 6 Albermarle Street, W1 (0171-629 5161), until Feb 27

□ Thomas Joshua Cooper is a landscape artist of another kind. For one thing he is a photographer rather than a painter; for another, though he lives in Britain, he is a 52-year-old California man, and member of the Cherokee nation.

For years he has been fascinated by rivers, their contours and surroundings. Not for him the sweeping panorama: his god is definitely in the detail. His vision is Pre-Raphaelite, his technique of painting his print surface with selenite harks back to 19th-century photography. Virtually all his pictures are so dark that they need close attention to unravel their mysteries. But for those willing to make the effort, his work offers unique rewards.

Michael Hare-Williams, 21 Cork Street, W1 (0171-434 1381), until March 5

□ PRIVATE means can be a problem. Celia Keen was

born in London in 1871 to a family of rich German coffee merchants and was passionate about painting from an early age, against her family's wishes. In her early thirties she broke free and studied in Paris. In England during the war she became friendly with Frances Hodgkins. But in the Twenties she was back in France, moving in avant-garde circles, which explains most of her later style, as seen in this rediscovery show.

It is really more of a discovery show, since most of Kean's work was never seen in public. It looks completely French, poised between representation and abstraction, boldly formalised, brightly coloured, sometimes reminiscent of Synthetic Cubism, sometimes close to Surrealism. For us she seems readily approachable; what a pity that she had to wait for nearly 40 years after her death for anyone to take notice.

Whitford Fine Art, 6 Duke Street St James's, SW1 (0171-930 9332), until Feb 26

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

POP

men drunk on her voice. It was easy to see why.

She was followed by Dioubaté, an exotically beautiful woman with a more up-tempo dance approach and a series of provocative moves which have earned her the name *la femme chie-chie* (shocking woman). She used her rippling rhythms and powerful voice not just to move our feet but to rail against the injustices heaped upon women in many African societies.

But it was Sékouba Bambo who showed how the rich heritage of ancient tribal custom and the excitement of modern dance grooves can be fused to create something that is both rooted in tradition and dynamic and original. He used an electric guitar alongside the ngoni, keyboards with the kora and a saxophone riffing away on top of the balafon to create a success of pulsating world beats that soon had the entire audience dancing — without harassment as the Barbican thankfully appears to have finally relaxed its ludicrous no-dancing policy.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

GREAT BRITISH HOPES

Rising stars in the arts firmament

CHIWETEL EJIOFOR

Age: 21.

Profession: Actor.

That name! His parents came from Nigeria, but he was brought up in South London and attended Dulwich College. He's sometimes known as Chiwi.

Big break: Playing Othello for the National Youth Theatre, being spotted and landing the role of the interpreter in Spielberg's film about slavery, *American*, while in his first year at LAMDA.

How was Hollywood? "It was a difficult adjustment to make at 19, but I relaxed into it."

A screen future? "I'd like to continue as I am, doing both film and theatre. They are very different disciplines. You

start to rely on tricks if you are in film too long. It's harder to fool a live audience."

Present stage: He opens tomorrow in *Splash Hatch on the E Going Down*, a play in the Donmar's American season. "I play the 18-year-old husband of the daughter of a Hartman family. It's about how the environment — the lead, asbestos, pollution — is even worse where there is poverty."

Modern satisfaction: "I'm really enjoying this play. It's emotional, energised, because of the innocence of their love."

Classical ambition: "Last year I toured the country for three months as Malcolm in *Macbeth* with Pete Postlethwaite as Macbeth. Now I'm longing to play the part myself."

In the pipeline: A film, *Greenwich Mean Time*, is due to be released in September. "It's about four characters aged 16 to 23 who all grow up in Greenwich. They all have problems, mental and physical. I'm the rock, supportive when things happen to other characters."

Is directing an option? "I directed at school. So perhaps, but I want to get this right first."

HEATHER NEILL

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THE TIMES WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 17 1999

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THEATRE

New York hit for London

THEATRE: Daniel Rosenthal talks to the rolling stone who is spreading the word of the Caveman

On love's long rocky road

On July 17, 1996, West 44th Street, in the heart of New York's theatre district, was renamed Caveman Way. Rudolph Giuliani, the city's Mayor, had approved the temporary change, and designated that Wednesday "Caveman Day" to honour the Californian comedian Rob Becker, whose *Defending the Caveman* had just become the longest-running solo play in Broadway history.

For 400 performances, Becker had mused on the various ways in which sexual roles defined in Neanderthal times — "Men hunt, women gather" — now contribute to niggling male-female misunderstandings in kitchen, bedroom or shopping mall. Six months after breaking the record, the 42-year-old left Broadway, hit the road and has since broken the 2,000-performance barrier. From tonight, West End audiences have a chance to judge *Caveman* for themselves, with the Australian comic Mark Little standing up for all things male, while Becker continues a seemingly interminable American tour.

"I think it's going to be a big smash in London," says Becker, speaking from Detroit. "Lots of British people saw the show in New York and told me how much they enjoyed it."

Becker's vision of heterosexual relationships might be subtitled *Men Behaving Mildly*. In *Caveman*, a bloke's greatest crime is to leave a wet towel on the bed. Men adore televi-

sion, DIY and fishing, abhor house-work and struggle to express their emotions. Women adore shopping and gossip and like to be told they look pretty.

The temptation to tag Becker "the John Gray of the stage" is strong even before you notice that the London publicity carries an endorsement from the author of *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*: "should be seen by anyone who wants to understand the opposite sex". Becker, however, had staked his claim to this lucrative turf 18 months before Gray's book was published.

As a newlywed, he had found that laughter was the best way to defuse tension when frustrated by fundamental differences with his wife, Erin. Ada, in a determination to defend his sex from female party guests who told him "all men are assholes", and his *Caveman* philosophy was born. He opened in a small San Francisco venue in 1991, began to sell out, then moved steadily eastwards, collecting mixed reviews and "house full" signs wherever he went. When he hit Broadway in 1995, lukewarm notices again did nothing to stem the crowds. Word-of-mouth turned an unknown into a phenomenon.

"I think a big factor in the show's success is that at base *Caveman* is a love story between myself and my wife — and with Mark Little the resonance will come from his relationship with his wife," says Becker. "All

the differences between men and women are used within the conventions of a romantic comedy. I keep the sexes at odds until the end, when there's a reconciliation."

Caveman's emphasis on the need for couples to acknowledge their differences has turned America's marriage guidance counsellors into some of Becker's biggest fans and he even performed at the annual conference of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. "We've got dozens of letters from couples saying,

"We were having a rough patch and you helped us through it," he says.

The son of an accountant, he grew up in San Jose, "about as far from showbiz as you can get", and is still occasionally "startled awake" by the success of the show. He need only have cleared \$500 from each American performance to have become a millionaire, although his lifestyle remains "pure" middle-class. "We live in Ross, a small town just north of San Francisco, in a nice house with a big backyard for our three

young kids to play in." At about 100 minutes a show, Becker has now spent the equivalent of five months of his life delivering "ever noticed how...?" observational comedy about adult behaviour — and reckons he is good for another couple of years on the road. His intention is, however, turning towards a sequel addressing the joys of parenthood. In Becker's evolutionary cycle, *Caveman* will eventually become *CaveDad*.

• *Defending the Caveman* opens tonight at the Apollo Theatre, W1 (071-494 5070)

Stone me: Mark Little, who will be presenting Rob Becker's *Defending the Caveman* in the West End

Three of an unkind

THE domestic interior has come a long way since the days of the kitchen sink. This trilogy of new plays at the Traverse Theatre takes as its starting point the classic family unit within that interior, and sets up even more classic conflicts down the generations within a contemporary setting. Riccardo Galgani's *Acts*, the longest and most satisfying work on show, sees prodigal son Pat returning home after he went out for a pint of milk 12 years earlier. As his all-but-housebound parents Jack and Marie swap niceties, struggling to find a point of connection, a deep, unspoken hurt becomes apparent in them all. Marie's flashes of anger allude to a lingering resentment, while Jack's absent-

Reviews by Mark Tully

Robert Wright finds the champion jockey riding to form in Hong Kong

Fallon's star shines brightly in the East

After winning his second successive jockeys' title, Kieren Fallon could have been forgiven for joining the traditional Newmarket winter migration to the West Indies. Some hope.

Coming to the end of a successful three-month stint in Hong Kong, Fallon's appetite for winners seems as insatiable as ever. Worst still for his rivals, he believes that he will return better than ever.

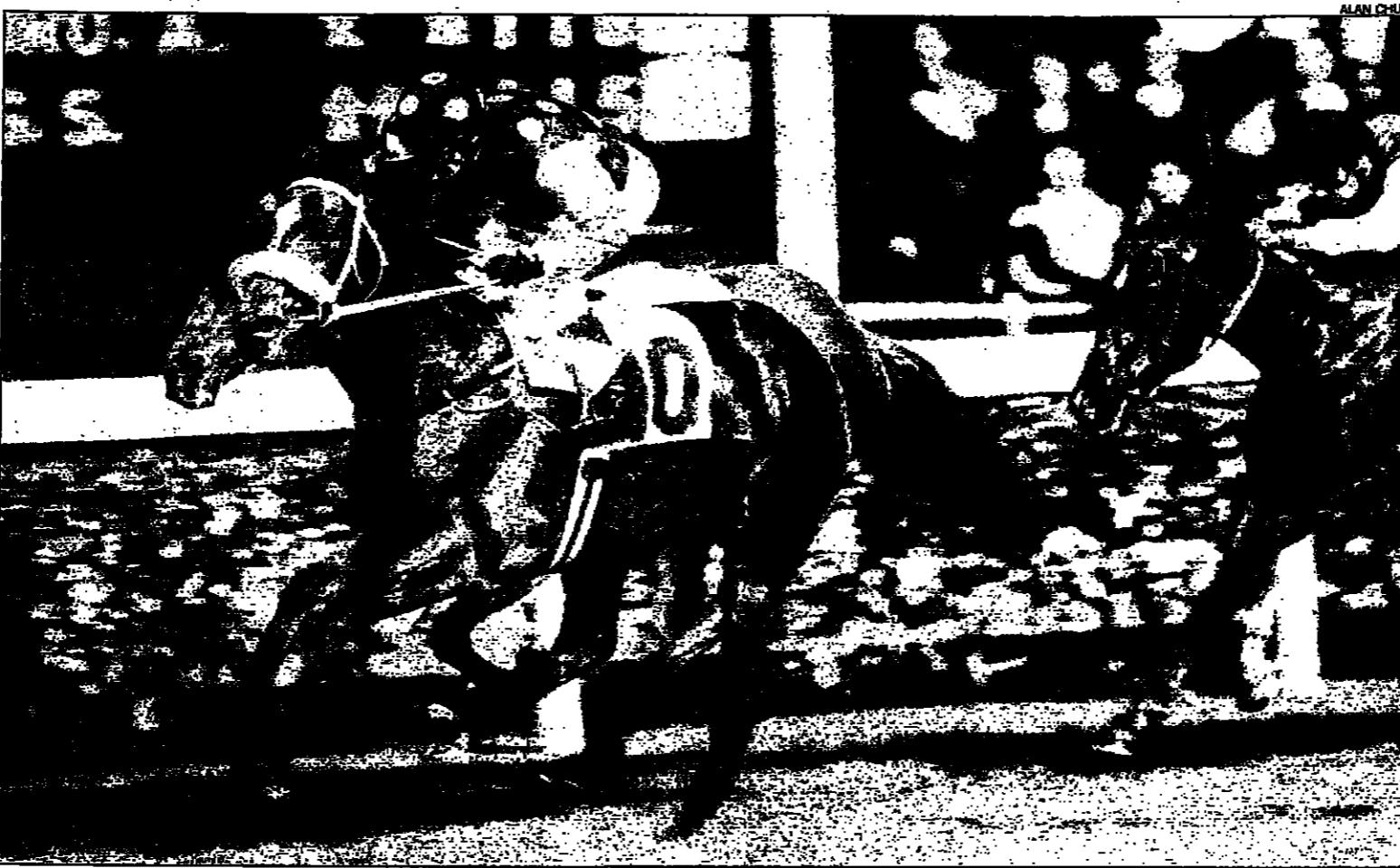
Fallon has long been recognised as a jockey of rare strength in a finish. With most races at Hong Kong's two tracks — Sha Tin and Happy Valley — comprising sprint handicaps around a sharp bend, he has had to adapt to the frantic tempo.

"With the tracks being so tight, you really have to watch out," he said. "There are some good jockeys out here, but there are plenty of bad ones, too — particularly some of the apprentices. I think I will be sharper than ever when I get back."

Fallon has broken the 200-winner barrier in both of his championship years, and anyone hoping to usurp his position will have an uphill battle if he hits his targets. "My main aim is to become the first jockey to ride more than 200 winners for three years in a row. Barring injury and suspensions, I think I have a great chance."

Further bad news for pretenders to his title is that Fallon believes that Henry Cecil, his main employer, has "the strongest team since I've been there." With Ian Balding having secured second claim on his services, the outlook has never been brighter for him.

The Irishman has certainly made a huge impact on the gambling-mad Chinese since



Fallon swoops on the outside to claim another winner at Happy Valley and continue his winning ways in Hong Kong this winter

his arrival in the former British colony. A total of 16 winners may not sound too exciting, but with an average of just two meetings a week, he has rarely left the track-empty-handed. Given the competitive nature of the racing, his strike rate — at around one in seven in the jockeys' table — makes an impressive reading.

Both tracks in Hong Kong are tight and right-handed, but Happy Valley, surrounded by high-rise blocks and neon lights, is Fallon's favourite. "The atmosphere is just electric," he said. "It's like Chester, but under floodlights and with much bigger crowds."

The lack of racing every day has given Fallon the chance to relax more than usual. Not that that is high on his list of priorities. He has been unable to resist the lure of regular trips to India, most recently last weekend when he played a starring role for a visiting team of riders in a match against the locals.

Racing in Hong Kong is as close to perfection as it can be

for a jockey (or owner, trainer and punter, for that matter). Average prize-money per race of HK\$755,000 (about £60,000) is the highest in the world. The lowest grade of races carry a prize-money of HK\$419,000. The financial situation is bolstered by a maximum income tax rate of 15 per cent.

Fallon is understandably delighted to have received his invitation from the Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC). "You are looked after brilliantly — I am living just over the road from Sha Tin. There are no expenses. The accommodation is provided and the owners love to take you out. With the tax rate being so low, you could soon

make yourself financially secure out here."

The reasons for this apparent utopia are simple. One, racing provides the only legal form of gambling. Two, there are no bookmakers siphoning off large profits.

The HKJC recently produced its annual report for 1998, and the figures are mind-boggling: betting turnover of HK\$9,413 million (£731.9 million), from just 75 meetings, generated HK\$12,069 million in tax revenue for the Government. Even with such a large slice being taken, punters receive 81.4 per cent of their money back and there is plenty left for the racing industry.

Betting turnover is of paramount importance. The HKJC is acutely aware of which type of race punters wish to bet on. Large fields of maidens are not the order of the day — most races are competitive handicaps.

Peter Jones, the Tote chairman, said: "The idea was to give one race a day a good boost, to lift it out of the ordinary and give the betting public something to excite them on a daily basis. The concept has worked well and is improving all the time."

The other bookmakers were generous in their support up until now, but that financial backing was never open-ended. In order for Showcase to develop, it has been necessary for us to pledge our backing for what we believe is a real winner."

The highlights of the Tote sponsorship programme include the Cheltenham Gold Cup, the International Handicap at Ascot, the Cesarewitch and the Cambridgeshire, the Ebor, the Chester Cup and the Silver Bowl at Haydock, which is being doubled in value.

Tote lines up £2m sponsor package

By RICHARD EVANS
RACING CORRESPONDENT

THE Tote is contributing a record £2 million to race sponsorship over the next 12 months — almost 50 per cent increase on the previous year.

More than 200 races will be supported by the pool betting organisation, compared to 109 in 1998-9, and all of Britain's 59 racecourses will benefit from the largesse.

The biggest increase in sponsorship will see the Tote taking on the Showcase race programme, previously supported by the company alongside the other big bookmakers.

The plan to create a feature racing race every day was launched at the start of last year's Flat season and has proved increasingly popular.

Peter Jones, the Tote chairman, said: "The idea was to give one race a day a good boost, to lift it out of the ordinary and give the betting public something to excite them on a daily basis. The concept has worked well and is improving all the time."

Fallon, not surprisingly, would "very much" like to be invited again next year. He leaves after racing on February 27, before broadening his horizons still further when competing for Europe against the United States in California on March 15.

There is no danger of him being ring-rusty for the start of the new turf Flat season at Doncaster on March 25. It would take a brave man to bet against him retaining his title.

Sedgefield pile-up, page 1

THUNDERER
2.00 Running Man 3.30 The Minder
2.30 Henry Cendo 4.00 Edan Heights
3.00 Salmon Breeze 4.30 Titus Andronicus
5.00 Dromondan

Timekeeper's top rating: 4.00 TAKEAMEMO.
Carl Evans: 4.30 Titus Andronicus.

GOING: CHASES: GOOD TO SOFT; HURDLES: SOFT.

2.00 BURMARSH NOVICES HURDLE
(2,854: 2m 11 110yd) (14 runners)

1 211 ACTOR FANCY 20 (G,5) (Colt) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
2 174 RUNNING MAN 20 (G,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
3 204-6 CONQUEROR 20 (G,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
4 180-7 DROMONDAN 20 (G,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
5 180-8 DROMONDAN 20 (G,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
6 180-9 DROMONDAN 20 (G,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
7 180-10 DROMONDAN 20 (G,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
8 180-11 DROMONDAN 20 (G,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
9 180-12 DROMONDAN 20 (G,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
10 180-13 DROMONDAN 20 (G,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
11 180-14 DROMONDAN 20 (G,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
12 180-15 DROMONDAN 20 (G,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
13 180-16 DROMONDAN 20 (G,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
14 180-17 DROMONDAN 20 (G,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
15 180-18 DROMONDAN 20 (G,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
16 180-19 DROMONDAN 20 (G,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
17 180-20 DROMONDAN 20 (G,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
18 180-21 DROMONDAN 20 (G,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
19 180-22 DROMONDAN 20 (G,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
20 180-23 DROMONDAN 20 (G,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston

BETTING: 4-7 Running Man, 5-2 Actor Fancy, 14-11 Thunderer, 15-1 Salmon Breeze, 16-1 Dromondan, 17-1 Dromondan, 18-1 Dromondan, 19-1 Dromondan, 20-1 Dromondan.

1998: NO CORRESPONDING RACES.

2.30 NEWCHURCH MAIDEN HURDLE
(2,894: 2m 6f 110yd) (16 runners)

1 120-4 CONCHOBOR 25 (G,6,5) (M) Harry Pritchard 7-11 - W Marston
2 120-5 DROMONDAN 25 (G,6,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
3 120-6 DROMONDAN 25 (G,6,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
4 120-7 DROMONDAN 25 (G,6,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
5 120-8 DROMONDAN 25 (G,6,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
6 120-9 DROMONDAN 25 (G,6,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
7 120-10 DROMONDAN 25 (G,6,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
8 120-11 DROMONDAN 25 (G,6,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
9 120-12 DROMONDAN 25 (G,6,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
10 120-13 DROMONDAN 25 (G,6,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
11 120-14 DROMONDAN 25 (G,6,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
12 120-15 DROMONDAN 25 (G,6,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
13 120-16 DROMONDAN 25 (G,6,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
14 120-17 DROMONDAN 25 (G,6,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
15 120-18 DROMONDAN 25 (G,6,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
16 120-19 DROMONDAN 25 (G,6,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
17 120-20 DROMONDAN 25 (G,6,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
18 120-21 DROMONDAN 25 (G,6,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
19 120-22 DROMONDAN 25 (G,6,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston
20 120-23 DROMONDAN 25 (G,6,5) (M) C. Morris 7-11 - W Marston

BETTING: 2-2 Conchobar, 4-1 Thunderer, 5-1 Dromondan, 6-1 Salmon Breeze, 7-1 Dromondan, 8-1 Dromondan, 9-1 Dromondan, 10-1 Dromondan, 11-1 Dromondan, 12-1 Dromondan, 13-1 Dromondan, 14-1 Salmon Breeze, 15-1 Dromondan, 16-1 Dromondan, 17-1 Dromondan, 18-1 Dromondan, 19-1 Dromondan, 20-1 Dromondan.

1998: NO CORRESPONDING RACES.

4.00 THREE COUNTIES HANDICAP HURDLE
(2,245: 2m 11 110yd) (7 runners)

1 303-14 SHOOTER 20 (G,5) (S) Davies 5 Down 8-12 - R Donnelly
2 303-15 TAKEMAN 20 (G,5) (S) Davies 5 Down 8-12 - R Donnelly
3 303-16 TAKEMAN 20 (G,5) (S) Davies 5 Down 8-12 - R Donnelly
4 303-17 TAKEMAN 20 (G,5) (S) Davies 5 Down 8-12 - R Donnelly
5 303-18 TAKEMAN 20 (G,5) (S) Davies 5 Down 8-12 - R Donnelly
6 303-19 TAKEMAN 20 (G,5) (S) Davies 5 Down 8-12 - R Donnelly
7 303-20 TAKEMAN 20 (G,5) (S) Davies 5 Down 8-12 - R Donnelly
8 303-21 TAKEMAN 20 (G,5) (S) Davies 5 Down 8-12 - R Donnelly
9 303-22 TAKEMAN 20 (G,5) (S) Davies 5 Down 8-12 - R Donnelly
10 303-23 TAKEMAN 20 (G,5) (S) Davies 5 Down 8-12 - R Donnelly
11 303-24 TAKEMAN 20 (G,5) (S) Davies 5 Down 8-12 - R Donnelly
12 303-25 TAKEMAN 20 (G,5) (S) Davies 5 Down 8-12 - R Donnelly
13 303-26 TAKEMAN 20 (G,5) (S) Davies 5 Down 8-12 - R Donnelly
14 303-27 TAKEMAN 20 (G,5) (S) Davies 5 Down 8-12 - R Donnelly
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17 303-30 TAKEMAN 20 (G,5) (S) Davies 5 Down 8-12 - R Donnelly
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58 303-71 TAKEMAN 20 (G,5) (S) Davies 5 Down 8-12 - R Donnelly
59 303-72 TAKEMAN 20 (G,5) (S) Davies 5 Down 8-12 - R Donnelly
60 303-73 TAKEMAN 20 (G,5) (S) Davies 5 Down 8-12 - R Donnelly
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68 303-81 TAKEMAN 20 (G,5) (S) Davies 5 Down 8-12 - R Donnelly
69 303-82 TAKEMAN 20 (G,5) (S) Davies 5 Down 8-12 - R Donnelly
70 303-8

United manager says recent reverses against Arsenal can be halted

Ferguson has eye on winning the race

By STEPHEN WOOD

THOSE who rail against the superfluous hype accompanying contests involving Manchester United and Arsenal will maintain that, whatever the outcome at Old Trafford tonight, there is time yet for either club to manipulate destiny in the FA Carling Premiership race.

Recent history, however, sides with the glory-seekers. There is compelling evidence that, whenever the reds of Manchester and North London clash in the grey area between winter and spring, the victors flourish and the losers settle for second place from here until May.

There is no longer a psychological handicap for us, because our record against them recently is so good. It has been a difficult few days for the club, but the players are focused and they have forgotten what happened in the game with Sheffield United last week.

"Our win in the match against United last year put our fate in our own hands. Beforehand, I was only thinking that if we could get a draw, it would not be such a bad result for us." Despite his bullishness, a similar sentiment may hold sway once more. Last season, United were seriously understrength this time, the misfortune is reversed.

Roy Keane, Gary Pallister, Nicky Butt and Ryan Giggs were missing from the United side 11 months ago. Arsenal, with Vieira and, in particular, Emmanuel Petit magnificent in midfield, took advantage.

Pet is suspended tonight. Likewise. Dennis Bergkamp, while Martin Keown, who yesterday urged his club to present him with a new



Scholes returns from suspension tonight to bolster United's Premiership challenge

contract that would keep him at Highbury for the rest of his career, is also absent. He is suffering from the hamstring injury that forced him off the field in the international between England and France last week.

Only Giggs is definitely missing for United, because his hamstring pull has not recovered sufficiently. Keane and Scholes return from suspension, providing cause for optimism for Ferguson.

"I bet you couldn't name our side for the game last year," he said. "Now, I don't think we could be playing Arsenal at a better time."

"We are playing with confidence, the team spirit is

great and we are looking forward to it."

Even their poor record against Arsenal in the past 18 months is not intimidating them. Ferguson said: "We know we've lost the last four to them and we are not burying our head in the sand over the bad run. But we had the upper hand before that, so these fluctuations will always happen."

The rider to all this is that, for once, other clubs such as Chelsea and Aston Villa would claim to have a proper chance of breaking the duopoly. However, there remains the feeling that United and Arsenal will prevail again to fight it out for the Premiership title. A draw

tonight, therefore, would not be a surprising result. Wenger said: "We have fought like crazy to get back into the title race and we are not going to throw it away now."

United yesterday recruited Bojan Djordic, a 17-year-old midfield player, from the Swedish club, Brorup. He has signed on a four-year contract and will arrive at Old Trafford in the summer.

"He's the best young player in Sweden," Ferguson said.

MANCHESTER UNITED (possible 4-4-2): P Scholz; S Neville, B. Sargeant, R Keane, J. Bonyon; A Cole, D. Yorke.

ARSENAL (possible 4-4-2): S. Venison, L. Deon, S. Bould, T. Adams, N. Winterburn, M. Overmars; N. Vieira, R. F. Gomes, N. Anelka, N. Keown.

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Getting one's teeth into the market for art

One of the more startling recent changes in the art world is that people don't automatically regard modern art as a joke or as an elaborate con-trick...perpetrated by pranksters who are the artistic equivalent of *Candid Camera*, people making paintings purely for the purpose of gauging the public's gullibility; or as the product of defused youths who believe themselves to be artists, but have the artistic talent of a radish.

It's not that we don't deserve the right to pass judgement on the mental stability of artists in the Turner Prize shortlist, or whose work appears in shows like *Sensation* at the Royal Academy, but that we at least bother to go along and form an opinion today, if you see a painting you feel your five-year-old son could have done, you don't just stand and smugger: you get him representation in Cork Street or Clerkenwell.

Of course, a lot of contemporary art is still junk. And there is still fierce debate about whether, say Jeff Koons, is an artistic genius or a charlatan. But just look at the crowds that swarm through the annual contemporary art fair in Islington. Look at how auction houses now hold sales of contemporary art — the sort of stuff which, ten years ago, was largely worthless and which had no secondary market the minute it left the gallery. There's now not only a renewed interest in modern art, but a new passion for owning it.

Beginning a new BBC2 series of *Close Up*, Chris Granlund's film, *Collectors*, tried to unravel what made people eager to write the cheques. Buying contemporary art is still a brave thing to do. Your friends will probably laugh at you, especially if you admit how much you paid for it as an investment, buying paintings that have been in and out of salerooms for centuries

REVIEW

Joe Joseph

find your beast and you isolate it, you hunt, and then you bag your catch. It's very, very satisfactory."

Granlund found that, as far as collecting goes, sense doesn't come into it. It's all passion. You've either been stricken by the lever or you have been. Vanessa Branstra compares her quest for buying art to a form of modern-day hunting: "You

the money. She told us last night that buying and commissioning art had even helped her through her recent divorce. She, like many other collectors, gets a big thrill from knowing that the artist is still alive, still painting. And there is always that casino quality to it: will these turn out to be the Pollocks and Rothkos of the future, or will they struggle to wash their face at a boot sale in 50 years' time?

Perhaps the shrewdest of the collectors we met was Adrian Mullish, a dentist who for many years fixed Damien Hirst's teeth free in exchange for artworks, an arrangement I'm sure he has made clear to the moon. He owns a spot painting and has one of Hirst's medicine cabinets hanging in his surgery (his wife won't let it in the house), which, frankly, blends just a little too well into the surgery's surroundings really to stand out as a work of art. Maybe it isn't anyway. Hirst, who has

benefited more than most from the money being thrown at the Young British Artists, is naturally dismissive of the vulgarians who think of art as commodities with price tags. And he calls auction houses Oxfam shops trading in second-hand art: that is, art which is no longer exciting and vibrant, but just objects to be bought and sold. Bless him.

John Cocker, a former student at St Martins College of Art, also champions a non-commercial view of art. In journeys into the Outside with Jarvis Cocker, Channel 4 gave the Pulp singer licence to visit various sites in France that are considered art by the people who produced them, but not by the artisit establishment. To prove to us that there is "much more to art than the stuff that hangs on gallery walls", Cocker showed us weird houses and edifices lovingly created by men

who were either unsung heroes or slightly deranged.

Take Bodian Litianski, a Ukrainian who moved to France in the 1990s and has surrounded his house with a forest of tall cement totem poles, each of which is covered with objects he has collected from the local dump. The arrangement? This comes to him in his dreams. I'd love to see how the estate agent markets this property when the time comes to put it on the market.

You could call Litianski's vision slightly unsavoury, but was it as unsavoury as Channel 4's *The Coroner*, a new four-part documentary on the Birmingham City Coroner's Office? Staff at the coroner's office all seem very compassionate and efficient, smashing people. And Ian Taylor's film did a snappy job of making a gruesome subject interesting. But it still felt as if we were intruding on the grief of strangers.

BBC1

6.00am Business Breakfast (9/1833)
7.00 BBC Breakfast News (7) (11524)
9.00 Kilroy (7) (886049)
9.45 The Vanessa Show (7) (4259524)
10.55 News; Weather (7) (522388)
11.00 Change That (5331165)
11.25 Can't Cook Won't Cook (7) (6301524)
11.55 News; Weather (7) (561611)
12.00 Open Call My Bluff (5271)
12.30 Wipeout (5922253)
12.55 The Weather Show (7) (48057475)
1.00 One O'Clock News (7) (14811)
1.30 Regional News; Weather (47779543)
1.40 Neighbours (7) (2684088)
2.05 Inside (7) (5712657)
2.25 Body Space (506544)
3.25 Children's BBC: Playdays (2989078)
3.45 Little Monks (5202022) 3.50
Clockwork (56541) 4.10 See It Saw It (3191389) 4.25 The Wild House (5744543) 5.00 Around (2284611)
5.10 Blue Peter (562233)
5.35 Neighbours (7) (561602)
6.00 Six O'Clock News; Weather (7) (494)
6.30 Regional News/magazine (746)
7.00 Airport (7) (753)
7.30 Tomorrow's World News series, Anya Starmer investigates new advances in fertility treatment (7) (630)



Eddie Murphy returns as the maverick cop Axel Foley (8pm)

8.00 Beverly Hills Cop III (1993) Eddie Murphy's role that shot him to stardom: the unconventional cop Axel Foley. Directed by John Landis. Continues at 8.30pm (246272).
8.50 The National Lottery: Amazing Luck Stories (528562)
9.00 Nine O'Clock News; Regional News; Weather (7) (1302)
9.29 National Lottery Update (654611)
9.30 FILM Beverly Hills Cop III The conclusion of tonight's film (7) (615340)
10.20 Mail of the Day Highlights of Manchester United v Arsenal (7) (783659)
11.10 Bias and White: The reporters investigate discrimination in the job market (23) (867104)
11.45 Robbie Williams: For One Night Only Exclusive concert in front of an invited audience (7) (780494)
12.35 Comeback! (1980) Biopic chronicling the career of pop promoter Bill Mercuccio. Directed by Taylor Hickson (7) (276573)
2.30 Weather (4142365)
2.35 BC News 24 (76834383)

10.20 In Sights (283272) 10.50 Match of the Day (7684712) 11.40 Black and White (2/3) (7) (57447) 12.15 Sam Robbie Williams: For One Night Only (7) (7556532) 1.10 FILM: The Jokemaker (7) (523316) 3.05 News Headlines and Weather (7) (5805537)
3.10-40 BBC News 24 (8705785)

BBC2

7.00am Children's BBC: Breakfast Show: Tales of the Tooth Fairies (3017099) 7.05 Telebutties (5628340) 7.30 The Really Wild Show (5073253) 7.50 The Really Wild Show (5790727) 8.18 Rewind (957833) 8.20 Teletubbies (2937533) 8.45 Police Dot Shorts (388107) 8.55 Tales of the Tooth Fairies (816992) 9.00 Environment (2038563) 9.10 What? Where? Why? (5683807) 9.25 The Art (4655458)
9.45 Words and Pictures (7185533)
10.00 Telebutties (91272) 10.30 Numberplate (282727) 10.45 Cats' Eyes (2770922) 11.00 Around Scotland (1264433) 11.40 The Geography Programme (3071659) 11.40 Science in Action (8472545) 12.00pm Review (4951920) 12.15 Hello aus Berlin (759165) 12.30 Working Lunch (31277)
1.00 Bruno (94030765)

1.10 The Travel Hour (7) (794727)
2.10 Sporting News (61840036)
2.40 News; Weather (7) (3102614)
2.45 Match of Their Day (7/18) (2659456)
3.25 News; Weather (7) (742024)
3.30 Awestruck with Colour (524)
4.00 Keys Advice Show (5060949)
4.25 Ready, Steady, Cook (7) (5633036)
4.55 Esther (7) (3307017)
5.30 This is the Day (7) (123)
6.00 Star Trek: The Next Generation: Wesley's Starfleet Academy squad suffers a deadly collision (7) (481562)
8.40 Buffy the Vampire Slayer (7) (247340)
7.25 Five Go Mad in the Kitchen: Recipes for Comic Relief (7) (602524)

7.30 Sophie Grigson's Herbs New series. The cookery writer celebrates herbs (7) (272)
8.00 Jersey Fashion Prize Cameramen follow young hopefuls in the world of fashion as they compete for the prize (7) (4543)

Lowri Turner returns with the fashion and beauty series (8.30pm)
8.30 **LOOKING GOOD** New series of the fashion programme with Lowri Turner (7) (3678)
9.00 **MODERN TIMES** New series. A unique look behind the scenes of Madame Tussaud's (7) (761727)
9.50 **BLOOD ON THE CARPET** The feud between two factions of the Countryside Alliance (7) (531949)
10.30 **NEWSPIGHT** (7) (553368)
11.15 **THE OTHER LIMITE** A man makes a shocking discovery (7) (432091)
12.00 **THE FILM SILVERS SHOW** (7) (6575079)
12.35 **WEATHER** (5435673)

12.30 BBC Learning Zone: Open University: Food: 1.00 Healing the Whole 1.30 A Time to be Born 2.00 Schools: Special Needs 4.00 Languages: Sweden World Spanish 13-16 5.00 Business and Training: Voluntary Matters 5.30 20 Steps to Better Management: Helping Others to Achieve 6.45 Open University: Questions About... 7.00 A Conflict of Interests 8.35 Hearing the Call

HTV

5.30am ITV Morning News (37123)
6.00 GMTV (5677730)
9.25 Twisted (7) (5210475)
10.20 This Morning (7) (1131792)
12.15pm HTV News (7) (7985611)
12.30 HTV Lunchtime News (7) (22833)

1.00 WEST: Next Stop Richard Wyatt, Poly Lloyd and correspondents visit Bridgewater to review local developments (49307)

1.00 WALES: Shortland Street: Rebecca faces rejection (49307)

1.30 Home and Away Joel fights to save his family (7) (27524)

2.00 The Jerry Springer Show Outrageous US talk show (7) (5638814)

2.45 Dale's Supermarket Sweep (7) (32492)

3.15 ITN News Headlines (7) (2052956)

3.20 HTV News (7) (5202479)

3.25 CITV: Cartoon Time (5974746) 3.45 Jumanji (561104) 4.10 Whizzwag (6036582) 4.40 Mad for It (2075745)

5.10 A Country Practice Harry changes his views on religion (5676433)

5.40 ITN Early Evening News; Weather (7) (544223)

5.55 HTV Crimewatchers (785901)

6.00 Home and Away (7) (59497)

7.30 Coronation Street: Nick and Leanne arrive back from Canada (7) (758)

8.00 The Brit Awards 1999 Johnny Vaughan hosts the pop industry's annual bash from London Arena, with performances by Cher, Boyzone, The Corrs, Mariah Carey and Robbie Williams, plus a celebration of Abba's 25th anniversary (7) (7748)

8.30 News at Ten; Weather (7) (80758)

10.30 HTV News and Weather (7) (947901)

10.40 **WALK ON THE WILDLIFE** A nostalgic look at the history of glam rock (7) (763748)

11.40 Renegade Reno runs into trouble with a voodoo curse in New Orleans (80307)

12.40pm **DESCENDING ANGEL** (1990) A man formerly suspected of being a Nazi war criminal finds his past again coming under scrutiny. Starring George C. Scott. Directed by Jeremy Kagan (167215) 1.25 **MASTERCLASS** With photographer James Martin (57) (7655983)

2.55 Judge Judy (7) (1212895)

3.25 Trisha Shows off (7) (9115031)

4.35 **THE MAKING OF ELIZABETH** Behind-the-scenes report (3930587)

4.50 ITV Nightscram: Behind the scenes of TV programmes (8671676)

5.00 Coronation Street (7) (7) (46012)

5.30 **ITV'S 55TH ANNIVERSARY** (7) (5414361)

6.00 **ANGEL** (1990) 8.00 **ANGEL** (1990) 8.30 **ANGEL** (1990) 9.00 **ANGEL** (1990) 9.30 **ANGEL** (1990) 10.00 **ANGEL** (1990) 10.30 **ANGEL** (1990) 11.00 **ANGEL** (1990) 11.30 **ANGEL** (1990) 12.00 **ANGEL** (1990) 12.30 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.00 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.30 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.45 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.50 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.55 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.58 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.59 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.60 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.61 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.62 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.63 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.64 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.65 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.66 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.67 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.68 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.69 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.70 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.71 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.72 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.73 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.74 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.75 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.76 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.77 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.78 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.79 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.80 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.81 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.82 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.83 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.84 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.85 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.86 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.87 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.88 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.89 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.90 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.91 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.92 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.93 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.94 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.95 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.96 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.97 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.98 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.99 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.00 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.01 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.02 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.03 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.04 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.05 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.06 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.07 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.08 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.09 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.10 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.11 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.12 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.13 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.14 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.15 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.16 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.17 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.18 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.19 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.20 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.21 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.22 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.23 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.24 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.25 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.26 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.27 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.28 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.29 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.30 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.31 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.32 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.33 **ANGEL** (1990) 1.34 **ANGEL</**



GOLF 38

Coltart sets his sights on the Ryder Cup veterans

SPORT

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 17 1999

New England manager to keep his connections with Fulham

Keegan performs double act

BY OLIVER HOLT
FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

KEVIN KEEGAN is set to be named as the new England manager today at a press conference in Sheffield after it appeared that the Football Association had bowed to his demands and agreed to allow him to retain his links with Fulham for 18 months and dictate the terms of his working relationship with Howard Wilkinson, the FA's technical director.

It was thought at first that the English game's governing body would balk at Keegan's determination to combine the uphill struggle of trying to guide England to the 2000 European championship with the task of attaining his dream of guiding Fulham to the FA Carling Premiership next season. When the influential members of the FA's international com-



Looking ahead: Keegan's immediate task will be to revive England's faltering European championship qualifying campaign. Photograph: Dan Chung

mittee met at a London hotel yesterday, though, it took them only two hours to agree to most of his terms and decide that he should be the successor to Glenn Hoddle. "Progress is being made," was all they would say officially, but it was like the first wisp of white smoke.

Sources at the FA said that they were confident a satisfactory *modus operandi* could be arranged so that England got more than enough of Keegan's energy and dynamism, even though he was still involved at Craven Cottage. It is thought that he will compromise by missing some Fulham games so he can watch England players in action in the Premiership. Still, there seems little doubt that Keegan, who is likely to include Peter Beardsley, the former Newcastle United player, among his backroom staff, has got his own way. Not only will he become England's first part-time manager since the Second World War, but he will also have autonomy on the training pitch, too.

There were concerns that the role of Wilkinson, who would like to extend his own

power base to include overall control of the national team and the under-21s, would be a hindrance to Keegan's willingness to take over. It seems, though, that Keegan has won assurances from Noel White, the chairman of the international committee, that Wilkinson will not be allowed to sit on the bench at England matches. He will also be told that Bisham Abbey is Keegan's domain during England training sessions and that his presence there will be discouraged.

Some, like Arsène Wenger, the Arsenal coach, had their doubts about the part-time element of the arrangement.

Terry Venables said yesterday that Kevin Keegan would be a "very, very good appointment" as England coach, but admitted he was disappointed that he had not been officially approached himself. "I think my international career was ruined by maybe one or two people at the FA," he said.

Holland and Belgium. His skills as a motivator are unparalleled. Even his great rival, Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, admits

that Keegan's bold step by the FA, a risk but a risk worth taking. Keegan has the dynamism to give England and their supporters an immediate lift for their crucial European championship qualifying tie against Poland at Wembley on March 27, a match England must win if they are to have any realistic hope of making the finals in

pointment is good news for England's flair players, particularly the Real Madrid-bound Steve McManaman, of whom Keegan is a confirmed admirer. It will be a more cavalier England we see from now on, a more aggressive, adventurous England.

The fear, of course, is that Keegan's boldness and what some identify as a certain tactical naivety will be punished by the more clinical, ruthless European sides. There were not many goalless draws in his time in charge at St James' Park, but England supporters will be happy if they start winning games 4-3, not losing them 1-0. There are those, too, who fear that his volatility will quickly ruin his relationship with the media, that his emotional vulnerability to criticism will make him an easy target for the kind of gratuitous criticism that the

England job attracts. That much may be true, but if he continues his policy of openness and evenhandedness with the press, then there will be few problems of that sort. Hoddle lost the confidence of both his players and the media because of his predilection for being economical with the truth, for encouraging his players to lie.

Keegan, in contrast, as he reminded people on Sunday, is "an open book". It will, undoubtedly, be a rollercoaster ride, but it is about time that someone tried to sweep supporters away with their enthusiasm at international level before it is too late and club football takes over completely. Keegan has his flaws, but his talent and his reputation, coupled with the respect that the players will have for him, are ample consolation for the fun is about to start.

SAILING 42

Autissier's battles against the tides of misfortune

Wilkinson and Rees return for national service

BY DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

ENGLAND will take their bow in the final Five Nations Championship with two changes to the side that closed out 1998 with victory over South Africa. David Rees returns on the right wing for Scotland at Twickenham on Saturday and Jonathan Wilkinson, still only 19, starts his first championship match at centre as England's first-choice goalkicker.

It is, in many ways, a second coming for Wilkinson, who

was given his first taste of international rugby as a last-

minute replacement against

Ireland last March before participating in two matches on

the ill-fated summer tour of

the southern hemisphere —

the 76-0 defeat by Australia

and the 64-22 defeat by New

Zealand. Now Clive Woodward, the England coach, has

decided to give him a decent

chance of contributing to a

winning team against a Scotti

land squad likely to include

Alan Tait, alongside whom

Wilkinson played as Newcas

ter motored powerfully to the

Allied Dunbar Premiership

title last season.

It is not Wilkinson's pre

ferred position — fly half is

where he is likely to make a

lasting name for England —

but in the absence through in

jury of Will Greenwood, and

Paul Glanville, it is where

he is needed.

Woodward has kept faith in

nearly all respects with the

team that claimed an historic 13-7

win over South Africa in

December. The only unforced

change brings back Rees, the

Safe wing, for his seventh cap

ahead of Tony Underwood, of

Newcastle. Rees, 24, dogged

by injury in recent times,

clinched his place with a good

display against Richmond last

Sunday.

Wilkinson's recovery from

the traumas of the summer

tour has been demonstrated

by his consistent form for his

team.

I'm looking forward, anyway,

to seeing Matt play scrum half

now that Kyran Bracken is

back on the bench and back on

top of his form."

The only other change is

among the replacements, where

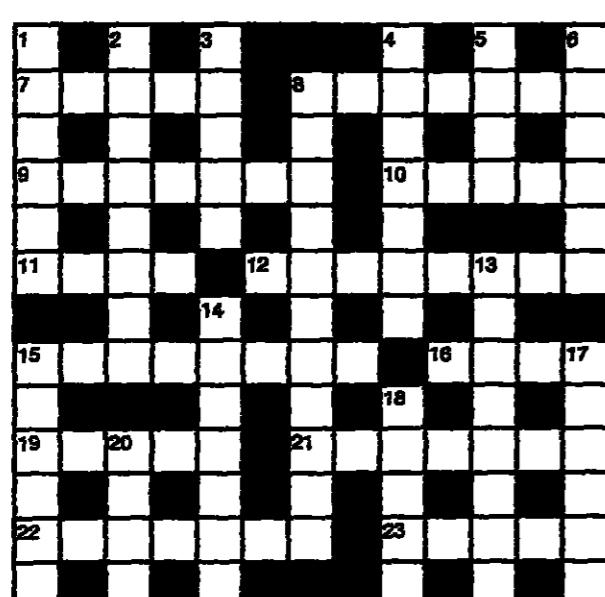
Neil McCrory, of

Gloucester, replaces Phil

Greening.

Hill dismissed page 41

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1643

CROSS
7 Barber: business (5)
8 Irritable (7)
9 Molify (7)
10 Regular radiation burst (5)
11 Ship arrive cut short (4)
12 Grape orchard (8)
15 Very productive (8)
16 In low spirits (4)
19 Prop (up) (5)
21 With sharp corners: stiff, bony (7)
22 In according to law (7)
23 Madrid art gallery (5)

DOWN
1 A: 6; a: 19; to: 17 (6)
2 A cold Spanish soup (8)
3 Take one's ease (5)
4 Cause puzzlement (7)
5 Young lady (4)
6 Spiral on screw (6)
8 Introductory (11)
13 Danger-over signal (3,5)
14 Luminous beetle (7)
15 Grinding tool, in morar (6)
17 A colour explosive signal (6)
18 With mouth open (5)
20 Wild party (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1642
ACROSS: 1 Cavalier 5 Zinc 9 Oblique 10 Panda 11 Edge
12 Pavill 14 Elders 16 Census 19 Mander 21 Hill
24 Round 25 Tobacco 26 Head 27 White lie
DOWN: 1 Clog 2 Valid 3 Liqueur 4 Exempt 6 Ignous
7 Charles I 8 Spey 13 Besmirch 15 Dracula 17 Exhibit
18 Crutch 20 Dodo 22 Local 23 Port

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Dundee considers equation of two becoming one

Phil Gordon on the possibility of a merger between rival Scottish clubs

For a city whose prime tourist attraction is the ship on which Captain James Cook sailed to the New World, Dundee found the analogy of its football teams inescapable yesterday. The City of Discovery woke up to find that a merger between Dundee and Dundee United had appeared on the horizon and, more important, that the brave new world of Scottish football was not against the idea. Roger Mitchell, the chief executive of the Scottish Premier League (SPL), said yesterday that a union of two of the country's most renowned clubs would be acceptable. What must now be determined is the depth of support within Dundee itself for the idea.

Both clubs would have different aspirations from any merger, but the unifying attraction is greater capital and a larger potential audience in a city of 180,000 people.

United are bemused after a

successful decade in the 1980s that saw them trounce on the preserves of larger clubs at home and abroad. They won the Premier League title in 1983, reached the European Cup semi-finals the next year and were beaten UEFA Cup finalists in 1987.

Dundee, though, are sinking fast. Once they were the city's pre-eminent team, winning the first division title in 1962 and reaching the semi-finals of the European Cup the next season, but subsequent failure saw their support dwindle.

A return to the Premier League this season has failed to lure fans back, prompting Peter Marr, the Dundee chief executive and one of the owners of the club, to suggest a possible merger.

We had hoped for 6,000 Dundee fans to turn up regularly this season, but we are only getting half of that. We cannot go on like this, he said.

"Football is a business and mergers happen in business. If there is a feeling that this is the way ahead, we could well decide to ask for talks with United."

A Dundee United spokesman said: "We would be happy to meet Peter Marr and discuss anything. There is good co-operation between the clubs, but talk of an amalgamation at this time is pure speculation."

Marr has spent around £1 million keeping the club afloat since taking it over two years ago, but the prospect of completing urgent work on the ground — which could cost another £3 million — to comply with SPL demands has forced him to consider a coalition. The SPL will accommodate such a bold move, but will not countenance any ground-sharing at Tannadice.

It is not the first time in recent years that Scottish football has considered the idea of such an association. When Wallace Mercer, the Heart of Midlothian chairman, tried to join forces with Hibernian in 1990, the supporters of the respective clubs protested and the idea was aborted.

In 1994, Inverness Caley and Inverness Thistle merged to become Inverness Caledonian Thistle. Ill-feeling between fans of the rival clubs was not eased until the move to a new stadium in 1997. Now the team, backed by support of 3,000, looks certain to win promotion to the first division.

Billy Dods, the Dundee United striker, who has also played for Dundee, is not sure that the experiment would work on Tayside. "If a merger goes ahead, I can see a lot of unhappy people in this city," he said. "No one wants to see anyone go to the wall. But there is a lot of tradition which will stand in the way of the clubs coming together."



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